

The Divine Presence in Preaching:
A Homiletical Analysis of
Contemporary Korean Sermons

by

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Abstract

Declaration

The witness of God in preaching is a topic that has been discussed in the Bible, in the history of homiletics, and in contemporary homiletics and preaching ministry. However, more specifically speaking, contemporary Korean preaching also needs a normative and exegetical homiletical foundation for the homiletically appropriate witness of the divine presence.

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this dissertation is my own original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any university for a degree.

I also declare that I have not plagiarized any other work, and I have accepted all the strategic suggestions on this homiletical theme.

In chapter 1, in order to prepare to analyze and explain the practical reality of the witness of the divine presence in Korean preaching, we constructed an appropriate sermon analysis model. This consists of the following three components: analysis norms (God, the Scriptures, the preacher, and the audience), analysis targets (the five representative Korean preachers, i.e., Dae-Sun Park, Yong-Gil Cho, Sun-Hee Kwak, Han-Ho Cho, and Dong-Won Lee), and analysis background (the sociological background of the Korean national personality in relation to the four indigenous Korean religions – Shamanism, Buddhism, Christianity, and Neo-Confucianism).

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Based upon this analytical frame, from chapter two till six, this study analyzed the sermons of representative Korean preachers with the guidance of the analysis model. Dae-Sun Park (ch. 2), Yong-Gil Cho (ch. 3), Sun-Hee Kwak (ch. 4), Han-Ho Cho (ch. 5), and Dong-Won Lee (ch. 6), and observed several homiletical aspects of the witness of the divine presence in contemporary Korean preaching. Through this detailed analysis of the five representative Korean preachers' sermons, we noted the fact that God-images implemented by the preacher cannot help being confined by the specific pastoral interests or theological emphasis that the preacher has in mind, as raised from the existential experience of the preacher, the theological emphasis, or pastoral context. However, without an appropriate consideration of the four components of preaching, the witness of the divine presence cannot achieve the desirable sermonic results.

With this homiletical necessity in mind, we discussed the normative foundation of the witness of the divine presence in relation to the four components of preaching: God (ch. 7), the Scriptures (ch. 8), the preacher (ch. 9), and the audience (ch. 10). After establishing a normative understanding of how each component is to be involved in the witness of the divine presence, we have also made several strategic suggestions in relation to Korean preaching.

Abstract

The presence of God in preaching is one of the most important Reformed homiletical themes. However, contemporary homiletics and preaching ministry do not pay due attention to this theme. More specifically speaking, contemporary Korean preaching also asks for a more comprehensive homiletical foundation for the homiletically appropriate witness of the divine presence in preaching. Based upon Dingeman's practical theological methodology, this study thus aims to describe and examine the practical realities of the witness of the divine presence in contemporary Korean preaching, and to make further some comprehensive normative and strategic suggestions on this homiletical theme.

In chapter 1, in order to prepare to analyze and explain the practical reality of the witness of the divine presence in Korean preaching, we constructed an appropriate sermon analysis frame that consists of the following three components: analysis norms (God, the preacher, the Scriptures, and the audience), analysis targets (the five representative Korean preachers and their sermons – Yune-Sun Park, Yong-Gi Cho, Sun-Hee Kwak, Han-Hum Oak, and Dong-Won Lee), and analysis variables (the religio-sociological background of the Korean corporate personality in relation to the four indigenous Korean religions - Shamanism, Taoism, Buddhism, and Neo-Confucianism).

Based upon this analytical frame, from chapter two till six, this study analyzed in detail five sermons of representative Korean preachers with the guidance of the analytical questions: Yune-Sun Park (ch. 2), Yong-Gi Cho (ch. 3), Sun-Hee Kwak (ch. 4), Han-Hum Oak (ch. 5), and Dong-Won Lee (ch. 6), and observed several homiletical aspects of the witness of the divine presence in contemporary Korean preaching. Through this detailed analysis of the five representative Korean preachers' sermons, we noted the fact that God-images implemented by the preacher cannot help being confined by the specific pastoral interests or theological emphasis that the preacher has in mind, as raised from the existential experience of the preacher, the theological emphasis, or pastoral context. However, without an appropriate consideration of the four components of preaching, the witness of the divine presence cannot achieve the desirable sermon results.

With this homiletical necessity in mind, we discussed the normative foundation of the witness of the divine presence in relation to the four components of preaching: God (ch. 8), the Scriptures (ch. 9), the preacher (ch. 10), and the audience (ch. 11). After establishing a normative understanding of how each component is to be involved in the witness of the divine presence, we have also made several strategic suggestions in relation to Korean preaching.

In chapter 8, based upon the pneumatological dimension of preaching, we confirmed that the witness of the divine presence should be rendered in a linguistic and ecclesial frame, and suggested that God-images should be used based upon Christian narrative that brings about a linguistic and ecclesial collision between the identity narrative of the Christian community and the individual's narrative in preaching.

In chapter 9, in connection with the question of how the voice of the Bible can be involved in the witness of the divine presence, we discussed the sacramental character of the Bible to mediate the divine presence to the Christian reader, and suggested that the reading of the Bible should make the transformative encounter with God happen to the reader.

In chapter 10, we examined the question of how the voice of the preacher can be harmoniously involved in the witness of the divine presence, and paid attention to the three factors which the preacher is aware of in preaching: God (spirituality), the audience (integrity), and self (subjectivity and conviction).

In chapter 11, we tackled the question of how the audience can be involved in the witness of the divine presence. Here we firstly defined the audience in relation to the other three components of preaching: in relation to God (theological, pneumatological, and eschatological being), to the Bible (hermeneutical being), and the preacher (communicative being). In addition to these definitions, we also defined the audience according to the reception axis of the Word: as an individual being (human heart and paradigmatic imagination), ecclesial and communal being (the divine presence through the pastoral ministry), and as one who is engaged in the world (socio-political responsibility to reflect the divine presence to the world). Based upon these definitions, we further suggested an appropriate communicative strategy for the witness of the divine presence, which consists of the image of God who is present in suffering, the communicative frame of the poor in spirit, and the four linguistic dimensions of confessional, evocative, hermeneutic, and imaginative witness.

Through these normative and strategic suggestions, we confirmed and suggested that the witness of the divine presence should involve comprehensively all four components of preaching: God, the Scripture, the preacher, and the audience so as to sound like a sermonic symphony in which all four voices harmoniously take part in the witness of the divine presence, while retaining their own homiletical value.

Opsomming

Die teenwoordigheid van God in die prediking is 'n belangrike Reformatoriese tema. Hedendaagse homiletiek skenk egter nie genoeg aandag daaraan nie. Veral eietydse Koreaanse prediking kort 'n meer omvangryke homiletiese basis vir hierdie aangeleentheid. Hierdie studie is gebaseer op Dingeman se praktiese teologiese metodologie en dit beoog om die praktiese realiteite van die prediking van die goddelike teenwoordigheid in Koreaanse prediking te ondersoek en te beskryf en om verdere omvattende normatiewe en strategiese voorstelle ten opsigte van hierdie homiletiese tema te maak.

In hoofstuk 1 ontwerp ons 'n toepaslike raamwerk vir preekanalise wat bestaan uit die volgende drie komponente: norme vir analise (God, die prediker, die Skrif en die gehoor); teikens vir analise (vyf verteenwoordigende Koreaanse predikers en hulle preke – Yune-Sun Park, Yong-Gi Cho, Sun-Hee Kwak, Han-Hum Oak en Dong-Won Lee); en die analitiese veranderlikes (die godsdienstig-sosiologiese agtergrond van die Koreaanse samelewing met betrekking tot die vier inheemse Koreaanse godsdienste (Shamanisme, Taoïsme, Buddhisme en Neo-Confucianisme)).

Gebaseer op hierdie analitiese raamwerk, analiseer hierdie studie vanaf Hoofstuk 2 tot 6 in besonderhede vyf preke van verteenwoordigende predikers na gelang van bepaalde analitiese vrae: Yune-Sun Park (Hf. 2), Yong-Gi Cho (Hf. 3), Sun-Hee Kwak (Hf. 4), Han-Hum Oak (Hf. 5) en Dong-Won Lee (Hf. 6), en let ons op sekere homiletiese aspekte van die getuienis van die goddelike teenwoordigheid in Koreaanse prediking. Deur middel van hierdie gedetailleerde analise merk ons dat die voorstellings van God soos getuig deur hierdie predikers beïnvloed word deur spesifieke pastorale belange en teologiese beklemtoninge van die prediker self of deur die pastorale konteks.

In die daaropvolgende hoofstukke bespreek ons die normatiewe onderbou vir die getuienis van die goddelike teenwoordigheid: God (Hf. 8), die Skrif (Hf. 9), die prediker (Hf. 10), en die gehoor (Hf. 11). Nadat die rol van elkeen van hierdie komponente bespreek is, maak ons strategiese voorstelle i.v.m Koreaanse prediking.

In Hf. 8, gebaseer op die pneumatologiese dimensie van prediking, bevestig ons dat die getuienis van die goddelike teenwoordigheid plaasvind in 'n linguistiese en ekklesiologiese raamwerk, en suggereer ons dat voorstellings van God voortspruit uit die Christelike narratief.

In Hf. 9 bespreek ons hoe die stem van die Bybel betrokke kan wees in die getuienis van die goddelike teenwoordigheid. Ons wys veral op die sakramentele karakter van die Bybel as bemiddelaar tussen die goddelike teenwoordigheid en die Christelike leser.

In Hf. 10 gaan ons in op die vraag hoe die stem van die prediker betrokke kan wees in die getuienis van die goddelike teenwoordigheid en gee ons aandag aan drie aspekte waarvan die prediker bewus moet wees: die relasie tot God (spiritualiteit), die gehoor (integriteit), en die self (subjektiwiteit en oortuiging).

In Hf. 11 bespreek ons die vraag hoe die gehoor (gemeente) betrokke kan wees in die getuienis van die goddelike aanwesigheid. Eers beskou ons die gehoor in sy betrokkenheid by die ander drie komponente: sy verhouding tot God (teologiese, pneumatologiese en eskatologiese wese), tot die Bybel (hermeneutiese komponent) en tot die prediker (kommunikatiewe komponent). Ter aanvulling van hierdie beskouinge definieer ons die gehoor as die ontvanger van die Woord, en wel as: 'n individuele wese (menslike hart en paradigmatische verbeelding), kerklike en gemeentelike wese (die goddelike teenwoordigheid d.m.v. die pastorale bediening), en as mense wat betrokke is by die wêreld (wat sosio-politieke verantwoordelikheid het om die goddelike teenwoordigheid in die wêreld weer te gee). Gebaseer op hierdie definisies het ons 'n toepaslike kommunikatiewe strategie vir die getuienis van die goddelike teenwoordigheid voorgestel, bestaande uit 'n voorstelling van God wat teenwoordig is by lyding, die kommunikatiewe raamwerk van die armes in gees, en die vier linguistiese dimensies van die belydende, evokatiewe, hermeneutiese en verbeeldingryke getuienis.

Met hierdie normatiewe en strategiese voorstelle bevestig ons dat die getuienis van die goddelike teenwoordigheid al vier die komponente van prediking behoort in te sluit: God, die Skrif, die prediker en die gehoor, ten einde 'n homiletiese simfonie te orkestreer.

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INTRODUCTION

1 Backgrounds and motivation of the study

1.1 The pastoral background

I was engaged in a preaching ministry as an ordained minister in a local church in South Korea when I felt the pastoral burden that I possibly did not proclaim the true Word of God, as my congregation and I believed it ought to be. Both my congregation and I, as Christians, believe that the preached word from the pulpit is not a mere human word, but the living Word of the God who comes, is present, and speaks to the gathered audience around the pulpit, as one of the important Reformed homiletical principles suggests: *Praedicatio Verbi Dei est Verbum Dei* (preaching the Word of God is the Word of God). However, in spite of this solemn Christian belief, I could not escape the following burdensome homiletical questions: How can my meagre human speech be proclaimed to the audience as the living Word of the Almighty God? What does the confession that a human preacher's proclaimed message is the Word of God mean in a practical preaching context? What reasons can we offer for our conviction that a human preacher's sermon becomes God's life-giving voice to a Christian congregation? When entering the pulpit, these questions about the homiletical relationship between a human preacher's speech and the Word of God in preaching always weighed my heart down. From this pastoral background, a strong motivation for a homiletical study of this preaching chasm between the living Word of God that we confess in sermons, and human words that we experience in the practice of preaching, has grown increasingly in my heart, to such an extent that it urged me to investigate this subject, i.e. the divine presence in preaching – specifically in Korean sermons.

1.2 The chasm between confession and practice in the preaching ministry

All Christians, who know the importance of preaching in the church, cannot but admit and confess the fact that God comes, is present, and speaks to believers through the preached Word. Many Christian preachers believe, implicitly or explicitly, and even publicly insist, that God is truly present and speaks to the congregation through their sermons. When preachers ask the congregation to listen to their sermons, their presupposed claim is that their proclaimed sermons are more than their human words. Although preachers use human language in their sermons, it is not mere human speech. It is more than a transmission of biblical knowledge or sharing Christian doctrine; it is a divine-human encounter in which God is present for His salvific purpose amidst His people. In this eventful encounter, the gathered congregation can meet the living God, and respond to His Word in such a way that

His will is continually done among His people. In short, the divine presence in preaching is a precious Christian belief and confession of the preaching ministry in the church.

In spite of this precious and fundamental confession of the Christian church, the contemporary preachers' and congregations' practical awareness of the presence of the living, speaking God in their contemporary preaching situation has, unfortunately, become very rare. Stott (1981: 10) and Larsen (1992:12) sorrowfully admit that the negative chasm between the proclamation of God's Word and His divine presence in preaching has become more evident in the contemporary church. The contemporary Christian congregation is no more likely to be aware of a divine presence in preaching, than the contemporary homiletical literature is to explore this fundamental matter in Christian preaching. Why is this so? Is it because the notion of the divine presence in preaching is too obvious to warrant the attention of the contemporary church? This does not seem to be the case. Then, is it because the notion of the presence of God in preaching is a matter beyond human investigation? Indeed, we must admit that the divine presence is beyond human comprehension because of the inscrutability of the Divine.

However, in spite of this inscrutability, we must not overlook the fact that the basis of Christian theology is not secured by only objective scientific methods. Rather, a point of departure of Christian theology but, more specifically, a homiletical exploration of the meaning of the divine presence in the church's preaching, can be found in the ecclesial role of Christian theology. Lindbeck's classification of religion offers a reliable point of departure for such an ecclesial mission of Christian theology. In his book, *The nature of doctrine*, Lindbeck (1984:16ff) offers a threefold typology for classifying theories of religion and doctrine. The first is a propositional view, represented by traditional orthodoxy and contemporary fundamentalism, which takes cognitive propositions to be the primary substance of religion, therefore of doctrine. The second is an experiential-expressive approach to religion, represented primarily by liberal Protestants since Schleiermacher, and by "ecumenically inclined Roman Catholics." This approach interprets doctrines as non-informative and non-discursive symbols of inner feelings, attitudes, or existential orientations. In contrast to these two standpoints, Lindbeck (1984:32) advocates an alternative theory of religion, which he calls "cultural-linguistics." In this view, a religion is a comprehensive interpretive scheme, a cultural and/or linguistic framework or medium that shapes the entirety of life and thought of its adherents. He regards Christian doctrines as not primarily expressions of experience or statements of timeless propositional truths, but rather as "communally authoritative rules of discourse, attitude, and action" (1984:18).

This perspective sees an appropriate role of Christian theology in terms of "Christian self-

description,” or “the second-order description” of the logic and content of the Christian belief, as embodied in a Christian community’s first-order language and practice. Here, the church’s first-order language and practice means the fundamental Christian language and practice that the church has sustained and rendered within the church itself; while the second-order description means the church’s theological self-description in order to clarify its self-understanding and path toward divine summation. Thus, “exercising both a normative and a critical function, Christian theology seeks to clarify and critique the church’s self-understanding embodied in its language and practices, rather than to explain how some aspect of the ‘human condition’ makes belief meaningful and co-relational in the view of the world” (Stroup 1981:86-87; Campbell 1997:45-46).

Examined in the light of this post-liberal theological mission, if theologians/homileticians ignore the ecclesial and homiletical significance of the divine presence in preaching, by deciding that this divine dimension is beyond human ability to articulate, then they are likely to misunderstand their own role and even that of homiletics. In this sense, the divine presence in preaching, a first-order language and practice of the church, deserves a second-order homiletical description so as to articulate theologically what the church confesses and practises regarding the truth of God.

However, sometimes this view on the role of theology is charged with having a conservative character, so as to fall into a closed “circular response” (Allen 1997:61). In his review of Lindbeck’s book, Mark Corner (1986:110-113), accuses Lindbeck of “ruling out of court the sort of critique of the Christian religion which seeks to expose the inadequacy of its truth claims.” In Corner’s view (1986:112), Lindbeck’s cultural-linguistic approach to religion, which insists that the text should interpret the world, rather than the world the text, is profoundly conservative and totalitarian. Corner appears to believe that religion must be reasonable, or, as Lindbeck puts it, intelligible and credible to the modern world. Thus, if we apply Corner’s criticism to our theme of the divine presence in preaching, then our homiletical study on this theme appears very much like a closed propositional study; a critique which thus demands a more rational and scientific frame in order to make the divine presence in preaching more acceptable to the modernistic view.

However, in connection with modern criticism of the Christian presupposition on a divine presence, it may help to examine the work of D Phillips, which Loughlin (1996:92ff) suggests as an alternative to rationalist criticism. In his essay, *Religious belief and language games*, Phillips (1970:78), using the theory of Wittgensteinian language games as a base, argues that the criteria by which we decide whether an issue is meaningful or not, in fact, is internal to Christianity. A modern rationalist may insist that criteria of meaningfulness must

apply both internally and externally to Christianity, so that the norm by which we judge the worth of any statement must apply to all contexts. However, Phillips (1970:85ff) questions this universal assumption, and insists that the reality of God, i.e. the divine presence, cannot be assessed with a common measure that also applies to other issues. The fact that it does not make sense to ask the same questions of God as of physical things suggests that the same criteria cannot apply. In Lindbeck's view, it is a matter of learning a language, assimilating the culture, and entering the textual world that the specific Christian community has been sharing.

In conclusion, it must be said that the divine presence in preaching, as a Christian belief and confession concerning the homiletical mode of the God-human encounter, is beyond rational, scientific assessment. As homiletical subject matter, it rather belongs to the sphere of the confession that the continual pulpit ministry of the Word is confirmed in the audience's first-order language around the proclaimed Word. By entering the Christian community, Christian believers learn the language of preaching, assimilate the practice of Christian preaching, and thereby learn that they are brought into God's presence during the preaching. Thus, the role of theology, especially that of homiletics (which can be described as the second-order of self-description), should be to examine the first-order language and practice of church ministry. This theological foundation for the investigation done in this thesis helps us to overcome "the theological homelessness of contemporary homiletics" (Lischer 1981:14ff; cf. Hauerwas 1989:161-162; Allen 1993:20; Johnson 1994:11; Wilson 1995:104).

1.3 The need for homiletics based upon a practical theological foundation

The other motivation for this study of the divine presence in preaching arises from a more specific need for a practical theological base for contemporary homiletics. As a field of practical theology, contemporary homiletics must firstly be firmly based on a theological foundation, and secondly, reap the beneficial fruits of practical theology in the specific area of pulpit ministry. For example, Firet (1986), a practical theologian, investigates the action of God who comes and reveals Himself to people in his Word, as the core of pastoral role-fulfilment. Firet's (1986:15,39) main practical theological concern is "the coming of God in his word," of which Firet offers significant insights, i.e. three structural modes: *kerygma*, *didache*, and *paraklesis*, as well as two dynamic moments: the hermeneutic and agogic moments. Here, we find a remarkable perspective on practical theology's contemporary concern. In his dealing with the development process of practical theology, Louw (1998:96) also confirms a similar aspect as follows: "The primary object of practical theology becomes the praxis of God, the ecclesial structure of the God-human interaction and the

meaning of the Christian faith for human actions in the world. Practical theology cannot ignore the praxis of God as exercised through the ministry of the church.”

The coming of God in His Word, or the God-human interaction in His Word, is a most important issue for practical theology. Moreover, this coming of God in his Word, in fact, is not only an important subject of practical theology, but also the constant concern of homiletics. As a theological field of practical theology, Christian homiletics deals with the God-human interaction, as exercised through the language of the church. Many contemporary homileticians (Wingren 1960:108; Parker 1992:42; Vos 1994:44; Schuringa 1995:187; Wilson 1995:21; DeVries 1996:17) strongly insist that, in preaching, God comes and is present in the congregation. In this sense, we could say that the theological notion of God’s coming and presence in His Word involves both spheres of practical theology and homiletics, and brings them into harmony.

However, in spite of this comprehensive concept of God’s coming in His Word, it is sadly not easy to obtain homiletical literature that furthers this practical theological insight in an extensive fashion. Many contemporary homileticians, indeed, acknowledge this negative situation. According to Lischer (1981:14,27), although preaching is a final expression of theology, contemporary preaching suffers from a certain theological homelessness. He investigates the following four results of the exclusion of preaching from theology: a lack of substance in preaching, a lack of coherence, preaching’s loss of authority, and the nonrelevance of preaching. In the same vein, Wilson (1995:104) also confirms that “generally homileticians have sidestepped the issue, preferring to analyse homiletical structure rather than name a theological center of proclamation.” As Ronald Allen (1993:20) also states, “we give little attention to theological analysis of the preaching event.” Contemporary homiletical works lack a thorough theological account of the homiletical moment, i.e. God’s coming and presence in preaching. For this reason, a homiletical study that involves and articulates God’s coming in His Word from a practical theological viewpoint is not only necessary, but indispensable. In summary, our homiletical study of God presence in preaching thus arises from the following three apparent causes:

- (1) A pastoral experience of the necessity for a sure understanding of the divine presence in Korean preaching.
- (2) Theology’s ecclesial responsibility to examine the ecclesial practice of the divine presence in preaching in order to combine both the confession (theology) and God’s true presence (practice) in preaching.
- (3) The homiletical necessity to be firmly based on a sound practical theology.

2. Problems to be examined in this study

When one starts to grapple with this homiletical study on the divine presence in preaching, many questions and problems may naturally arise, all of which connote profound and difficult homiletical themes, inter alia: What is meant by God's presence in preaching? How can mere human preachers realize the mysterious divine presence in their sermons? How can we humans assess, or even detect, God's mysterious presence?

In order to examine these questions in a more comprehensive fashion, I shall strive firstly to formulate a frame for preaching with the following four essential components of preaching in mind: God, the Scriptures, the preacher, and the audience; and, secondly, I shall try and relate the abovementioned questions to these four components, for example as follows:

- How is an image of **God** implemented in the sermon?
- How are **the Scriptures** interpreted in the preaching of the divine presence?
- What role does **the preacher** play in this preaching?
- How is **the audience** communicatively involved in the preaching?

The *first question* concerns the image that preachers hold of God in their mind and dominantly witness to in their preaching. An examination of this question may reveal preachers' dogmatic view of God. Further pertinent questions on this dimension will be asked mainly in terms of the content of the image or dogma of God, as well as the relationship between God and humans that the preacher has in mind and witnesses about in the sermon. The *second question* arises from the fact that witnessing of the divine presence in preaching should be firmly based upon the Scriptures. Thus, an additional related question regards an interpretative method for preachers as they deal with Scriptures as the primary witness of the divine presence. The *third question* concerns preachers' role in this whole process, and probes whether their theological or personal background exerts a positive or negative influence, and to what extent. The *last question* examines preachers' sermon relationship with the audience and its communicative results, which should be taken into account when structuring a rhetorical strategy.

These four questions are not isolated problems, but are mutually related. Our study aims to examine these intertwined homiletical structures by asking comprehensive questions that concern the four essential dimensions of preaching. A more detailed discussion of these four components of preaching can be found in 1.4.1.

3. Methodology of the study

In brief, the methodology that guides our study consists of the following two frames: sermon analysis and suggestive description. A more detailed methodology can be acquired from Dingemans's (1996:92-3) practical theological methodology. He indeed provides a useful research methodology for practical theology, which consists of four phases: the descriptive, explanatory, normative and strategic phases.

The *first, descriptive phase* consists of simply identifying the praxis or situation and describing its distinctive and constituent features (Farley 1987:12). This step aims at a sound description of the praxis and situation. The *second, explanatory step* seeks a critical explanation of the practical situation. At this stage, a hermeneutic of suspicion is introduced to the praxis or situation itself. In other words, the faith tradition, i.e. the essence of Christianity, the primary symbols, themes of proclamation, and the dogmas of tradition, are used as a hermeneutical key to examine the praxis and situation. The *third, normative phase* aims to redefine the normativity of the faith tradition in order to remedy the problems behind the practice or situation, and to provide a new direction and vision. Unless the faith tradition is redefined, its present understanding would become an object of idolatry. Through a normative examination, a way could possibly be found to remedy the problems, and clearly reconstruct the identity and mission of the community of faith. The *last, strategic phase* aims at making suggestions and recommendations pertinent to the proposed vision and direction in order to improve and transform the existing phase.

With this practical theological methodology in mind, we can reformulate our homiletical study on the divine presence in preaching in such a way as to involve the above four phases of study. Since a practical theological study commences by identifying the praxis or practical situation itself and describes its present constituent features, we should first select a number of actual, preached sermons. Based upon the methodological need for insight into the praxis, we selected five representative sermons that will guide us in describing the Korean sermonic situation.

In connection with the basis for selecting a specific preacher and sermon pertinent to our study, we suggest the following two basic reasons why specific preachers and their sermons are to be selected for our study. Firstly, the selected preachers must be the representative Korean preachers who can show the significant aspects of the Korean preaching ministry. As will be further explained (cf., 1.4.2.2), the selected preachers (Yune Sun Park, Yong Gi Cho, Sun Hee Kwak, Han Hum Oak, and Dong Won Lee) are well known figures in the Korean church, especially for their preaching ministry. Firstly Yune Sun Park played an important role in nurturing the conservative Presbyterian churches in Korea with his

devotional commitment for the biblical commentary and teaching ministry in the seminary. Yong Gi Cho also has been playing a crucial role in Korean church, while ministering one of the biggest church in the world. The other three preachers, Sun Hee Kwak, Han Hum Oak, and Dong Won Lee are also well known for their prominent preaching ministry in the contemporary Korean church (cf., Han 2000:12).

The other basis for the sermon selection is that each sermon should involve and reveal the important aspects in the witness of the divine presence. As briefly implied before (cf., 2), the divine presence in preaching is the result of an interaction among the following four voices of God, the Scriptures, the preacher, and the audience. The divine presence takes place through the interactive sermonic matrix of the four agents in the preaching context: the Holy Spirit, the preacher, the Scripture, and the audience. Thus, if possible, each preacher's specific sermon should be selected in which these components and interactive aspects can be identified and described, so as to reveal how each element functions, regardless whether its function is positive or negative. The more detail reasons and motivation for the selection of the specific sermon will be further described in "1.4.2.2".

In the second explanatory phase, we shall seek a critical explanation of the abovementioned sermonic reality. At this stage, we ask detailed homiletical analytical questions about the sermons. For the purpose of our study, the descriptive and explanatory (first two) phases will be incorporated in the sermon analysis; the actual sermonic situation will be studied inclusively with descriptive and explanatory aspects in view. Based upon this homiletical examination of the sermons, the normative and strategic phases will follow consecutively in order to redefine the normativity of the faith tradition in respect of the divine presence, and to make suggestions and recommendations pertinent to the proposed vision and direction. This should improve and transform the existing praxis of preaching as a witness of the divine presence. In summary, the methodology that guides our study therefore consists of the following two frames: sermon analysis and normative description.

4. Hypothesis

God enters, is present in the preached Word, and speaks to His gathered people. In order to investigate this homiletical confession and practice of the church, this study is done in a holistical fashion in terms of the following four theoretical frames: pneumatology (the agent of the divine presence), hermeneutics (the meaning and purpose of this divine presence), linguistics (the human instrument in the divine presence), and ecclesiology (the sphere of the divine presence).

- a. The divine presence in preaching should be examined within a pneumatological frame

because the presence of God in preaching can be served by mutual reciprocity between the Holy Spirit, the preacher, the Bible, and the congregation.

- b. An exploration of the meaning of the divine presence in preaching also requires a relevant interpretative frame, because the God-human encounter intends a redemptive covenantal purpose, and the interpretative work in preaching aids congregations in responding to this covenantal purpose.
- c. The divine presence in preaching should also be analysed within a linguistic, communicative frame, because God's presence in preaching is witnessed to by means of the communicative dimension of preaching, and can be grasped through the subordinate ministry of the human word, metaphor, imagination, and the Christian narrative.
- d. The divine presence in preaching should also be considered within an ecclesiological frame, because God's presence is realised within the ecclesial, rather than within the individualistic sphere. Within this communal framework, the congregation can be eschatologically joined in the full presence of God in His kingdom.

5. Provisional structure of chapters

Chapter 1 establishes the religio-sociological background as well as the framework for the homiletical analysis of the Korean sermons. In order to provide this background, this chapter will deal with five main Korean religious heritages, i.e. Shamanism, Taoism, Buddhism, Neo-Confucianism, and Christianity, with some additional comments on the collective suffering experience and the *Han* spirit. The framework for the homiletical analysis of five representative Korean sermons will also be explained in detail.

Based upon this religio-sociological background and frame for homiletical analysis, five representative Korean preachers' sermons will be analysed and evaluated from chapters 2 to 6, specifically in the light of their witness to the divine presence of God. In order to reveal the characteristics of these contemporary sermons, several critical homiletical questions will be asked to attain a description and explanation of the witness of the divine presence, in accordance with the first two phases of the practical theological methodology, as described above.

Chapter 7 compares the five sermons and preachers in the light of their witness of the divine presence. By means of these comparisons, we shall examine the merits and demerits of these sermons as witnesses of the divine presence of God.

Chapters 8 to 11 will implement the normative and strategic phases of the practical theological methodology, in order to redefine the sermonic practice under question homiletically, and also to offer some appropriate strategic suggestions pertinent to Korean preaching ministry.

To begin with, chapter 8 deals with the function and sermonic result of some specific images or faces of God in the witness of the divine presence. Here we suggest a more holistic frame for Christian narrative, in the light of the cultural-linguistic view of religious language, in which the ecclesial practice and communal witness play a paramount role in rendering images of God.

Chapter 9 discusses a normative foundation for the biblical voice that should be heard in the witness of the divine presence in preaching. Here, the main concern will be the Bible's sacramental character, the hermeneutical procedure of the God-human encounter, and a practical way of interpreting the Bible with the purpose of witnessing to the divine presence.

Chapter 10 seeks to understand the preacher's function in all of this. The preacher's function will be examined according to three focuses: the place and role of a human preacher in the process of witnessing; theonomic reciprocity; and the preacher's triple consciousness in witnessing—consciousness of God (spirituality), of the audience (integrity), and of the self (conviction).

Chapter 11 examines the question: How can the congregation be involved in the act of witnessing? This question will be dealt with mainly in the light of the following three focuses: the homiletical definition of the "audience" in relation to the other three components of preaching, namely God, the Bible and the preacher; the three reception axes of the Word of God; and an appropriate communicative strategy.

Thus, this dissertation consists of 11 chapters, besides the Introduction, General Summary and Conclusion, according to the following outline:

Introduction

Part I : The descriptive and explanatory phase

Chapter 1 Analytical background for the Korean sermon analysis

Chapter 2 **Yune Sun Park**'s sermon and analysis

Chapter 3 **Yong Gi Cho**'s sermon and analysis

Chapter 4 **Sun Hee Kwak**'s sermon and analysis

Chapter 5 **Han Hum Oak**'s sermon and analysis

Chapter 6 **Dong Won Lee's** sermon and analysis

Chapter 7 A comparative evaluation of the five analysed sermons

Part II : The normative and strategic phase

Chapter 8: The role of **God-images** in the preaching of the divine presence

Chapter 9: The role of **the Scriptures** in the preaching of the divine presence

Chapter 10: The role of **the preacher** in the preaching of the divine presence

Chapter 11: The role of **the audience/congregation** in the preaching of the divine presence

General summary and conclusion.

6. The aim and significance of the study

The main aim of this study is to offer a homiletical understanding of the witness of the divine presence in preaching. As a field of practical theology, this study requires a homiletical analysis of the practical reality in actual sermons. With this need in mind, we shall do a homiletical analysis of actual representative Korean sermons. Through this study, preachers may acquire a homiletical understanding of the relationship between preaching the sermon message and God's presence within that message, as an important Reformed homiletical principle suggests: *Praedicatio Verbi Dei est Verbum Dei* (The preaching of the Word of God is the Word of God).

7. Delimitation

This study has been delimited to the following two concerns: sermon analysis and theoretical development. Firstly, regarding the sermon analysis, the witness of the divine presence will be examined mainly from the sermon scripts, and a more real sense of this divine presence that may be acquired from the actual attendants of the service must be ignored in our study. Instead, other scripts of sermons preached by the relevant preacher will also be referred to, in order to enhance the analytical accuracy.

Furthermore, it should be stated that the divine presence in preaching is not the only and most important example of this presence. However, in order to keep to this dissertation's main focus, we will mainly deal with the "verbal presence" of God, excluding other types of divine presence, such as God's universal presence related to His divine nature, or His Eucharistic presence. For the same reason, other academic fields employed in this dissertation, such as hermeneutics, pneumatology, linguistics, ecclesiology, the interpretation process and Christian communication theory, will also be applied, but only in their specific relevance to this verbal presence of God in preaching.

Chapter one

The foundation of the Korean sermon analysis

1.1 Introduction

As the title “the divine presence in Korean preaching” implies, our study involves both the fields of practical description, as well as theoretical formation that takes the divine presence in preaching into account. As Dingemans’s (1996:92-3) four phases of practical theological methodology recommend, in preparation for revealing and describing the practical reality of Korean preaching, we first need to construct an appropriate analytical foundation, upon which we shall analyse five representative Korean sermons.

For an analysis of these sermons, in order to describe and explain the practical reality of Korean preaching, we also need to make decisions regarding the following three components of the sermon analysis: analytical target (the 5 representative Korean preachers), the religio-sociological background of the Korean corporate personality (influential in regards to witnessing about God in Korean preaching) and an appropriate homiletical analytical tool that will guide us in analysing the five sermons.

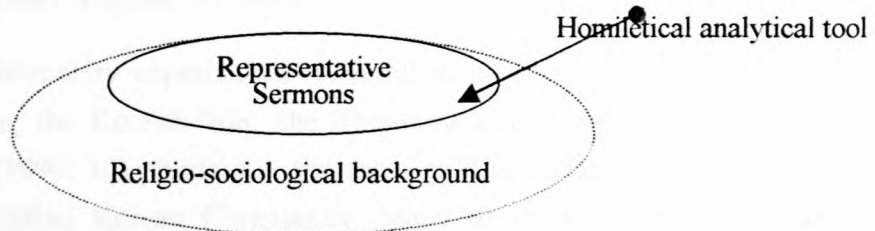


FIG 1. THE THREE COMPONENTS OF THE FRAME FOR SERMON ANALYSIS

Thus, in this chapter, we shall examine and make decisions about these three components of the Korean sermon analysis, based upon which we shall analyse the five sermons in further detail in the next chapter.

1.2 A brief survey of the main Korean religious heritages

In an attempt to analyse Korean sermons by asking the question how the divine presence is witnessed to, we need to keep in mind the fact that, for a long time even before Christianity was introduced (more than a century ago), various other indigenous religious heritages held sway in Korea. Thus, in a broad sense, Korean Christianity (or, in a narrower sense, the preaching in Korea) can never be free from its Korean religio-sociological background.

Every religion (e.g. Christianity), which enters a foreign cultural and religious sphere,

cannot but be influenced and modified by the previous existing religious culture, and vice versa (Kang 1998:106). Harvey Cox (1995:220) contends, "Religion is the arena within which much of this wrestling match between old values and new life-style is fought." When Christianity, which was thus completely grounded in Western modernity, entered Korea, it inevitably entered into dynamic relations with the previous indigenous religious heritages. The encounter between Christianity and Korean indigenous religious heritages "involves not only a process of inculturating Christianity in Korea but also a movement towards the Christian transformation of existing Korean culture and values into a new pattern of synthesis with the gospel's molding influence" (CS Chung 1997:21).

Thus, a Korean Christian confession that God is present in preaching, can never escape from so many socio-religio-cultural components that are derived from the surrounding religious and cultural contexts or other neighbouring religious heritages. As C Campbell (1997:69) points out, to become a Christian is not so much an individual, experiential event as a communal journey. Moreover, becoming a Christian is not only about communal immersion, but other neighbouring religious practices also influences one, whether this influence is positive or negative. In some cases, neighbouring religions even transformed and modified the whole communal practice. In Korean Christianity, this interaction also happens with various other religious heritages.

Moreover, Korean Christianity experienced remarkable socio-political crises, such as the colonization by Japan, the Korean War, the liberation movement, and rapid economic growth. As HS Kim (1999: 30) points out, the socio-political crises that took place in the past half century modified Korean Christianity. Many of these explanations blame the painful aftermath of the Korean War and the rapid economic and social changes that have taken place since then. Thus, without a study of both the Korean indigenous religious heritages and the socio-political cataclysm, either traditional or contemporary, our homiletical study of God's presence in Korean preaching cannot but be problematic; it would be difficult to acquire an appropriate and comprehensive understanding of it. Thus, in this chapter, before analysing the Korean sermons, we shall firstly describe the Korean indigenous religious heritages that influenced the formation and conception of the image of God, and the socio-political upheaval that also influences the formation of Korean Christianity.

In relation to the religious heritages that exert a resilient influence on Korean Christianity and preaching, the following four religions offer a sound starting point for our study: Shamanism, Taoism, Buddhism, and Neo-Confucianism. While examining Korean preaching in relation to these Korean indigenous religions that influence the formation of

Korean Christianity, JY Lee (1997:27-40) pays attention to the following three representative indigenous religions; Shamanism, Buddhism, and Confucianism. Describing “spiritual preaching” in the Korean context, EJ Kim (1999:33-43) also mentions the above indigenous religions with a similar emphasis. CB Chung (1999:22-29), also briefly mentions these three religions in relation to the study on Korean preaching. In addition to the above three representative religions in Korea, CI Song (1999:21ff) adds Christianity, and CD Gwak (2000:151ff) adds Taoism, in order to examine the influence of Korean indigenous religions on the formation of Korean Christianity more comprehensively. Thus, in spite of various other religious Korean heritages, in this chapter we shall concentrate on these five major religious traditions: Shamanism, Taoism, Buddhism, Neo-Confucianism, and Christianity, omitting others such as *Tonghak* (Eastern Learning), *Ch'ondogyo* (Religion of the Heavenly Way), and the *Won* (round) Buddhism, due to their relatively small influence in Korea. The study does not intend to develop a systematic analysis of each religion, but rather to examine some of their components that have had either a positive or negative influence on Korean Christianity.

1.2.1 Korean Shamanism

According to M Eliade (1964:4), “Shamanism in the strict sense is pre-eminently a religious phenomenon of Siberia and Central Asia. The word comes to us, through the Russian, from the Tungusic *saman*.” The Tungus word, *saman*, means “one who is excitedly moved and raised” (Clark 1961:174). However, this does not mean that Shamanism is found only in ancient Asia. Nor does it imply that the *saman* is the only expert of the “technique of ecstasy” (*cf.* Eliade 1964:4). In a general sense, *The encyclopaedia of religion and ethics* (vol. XI, 441) introduces Shamanism as follows:

It is a primitive religion of polytheism or polydemonism with strong roots in nature-worship, and generally with a supreme god over all. While the Shaman exercises certain priestly functions, his main powers are connected with healing and divination. These he exercises by virtue of his intimate relation with the supernatural world. Certain spirits aid him, possess him, and are at his command. He has direct intercourse with spirits, and actual (bodily or spiritually) access to the spirit world. With the aid of these, he obtains knowledge superior to that of the ordinary man, and can drive out hostile spirits or powers and generally during the exercise of his power, the altered mental state of the Shaman is in evidence. Through auto-hypnotism, caused by different methods, a state of trance or alternate personality is produced.

Nowadays, it is an established view that Shamanism in Korea goes right back to Korea's beginnings (KB Lee 1976:18, cited in HY Cho 1985:19). A Korean well-known foundational myth, the *Tan'gun* myth, which reflects the Shamanistic character of North

Asian culture, tells much about the “collective representations” of ancient Korea – its way of life, values, and world view (CS Chung 1982:17). It holds that, in 2333 BC, *Hwanung*, the son of the god of heaven, descended to a place under a sandalwood tree atop Mount *Taeback*, and he named it the ‘city of god.’ He ruled over all human affairs, including the growing of food, life, health, punishment, and morality. *Hwanung* married a girl who, because of her ardent prayer and strict adherence to religious taboos, had been metamorphosed from a bear. From this union a son called Tan’gun was born, who, in time, became the founder of Korea, ruled over the wild tribes and taught them civilized human ways to bring many benefits to humanity.

This foundational myth reflects several of the following important characteristics of Korean Shamanism: an absence of a clear differentiation between the heavenly world of gods and the world of man; the power of the god-man (shaman) to command wind, rain, and clouds; belief in the efficacy of prayers to attain specific, functional objectives (offspring, health, harvest, and human well-being); the interchangeability of different realms of existence (humans, animals, self, and the universe); belief in sorcery, animism, totemism, taboos, and a cult of mountains and trees (CS Chung 1982:608).

1.2.1.1 The shamanistic view of a god and *Hananim*

The Korean Shamanistic¹ view of a god is polytheistic or polydemonistic. TG Kim (1978) studied Shamanism in the Seoul area by interviewing a specific shaman living in Seoul. According to this study, a polytheistic god in the Korean Shamanism is the following:

The shape of god is the same as that of a human being. However, since a god does not assume a visible form that can be discerned by humans, a god is invisible to the human eye. A god is a transcendental and almighty being. There is a hierarchy between various shamanistic gods in the celestial world. The highest is the Heavenly god. After him come the god of the Sun, the god of the Moon, and the god of the Seven Stars; in the sublunary world, there are the Mountain god and the General of the gods. After them come the Ancestor god and the Birth god. Each god has his own responsibilities. The Higher official god is in charge of one’s property and the General of the gods has the power to drive away misfortune and disaster. Their work is divided up into appropriate areas of responsibility and each does only his own work (1978:45-46).

With this Shamanistic view of gods, Koreans have always used the vernacular term, *Hananim* (the heavenly one) or *Hanunim* (heavenly god), to refer to a familiar, omnipotent,

¹ Regarding the type of terminology used for Korean Shamanism, there are three different points of view among Korean scholars. Here the term, Korean Shamanism, refers to those primitive religious phenomena that are universal in North-Eastern Asia, in the same tradition as Siberian Shamanism (cf. HY Cho 1985:19-20).

personal and beneficial god, who promised his devotees prosperity, health and well being. In this term for a deity, *Hana* means 'the numerical one,' and *nim* is a kind of honourable personal suffix. Because Koreans already believed in the existence and power of a highest deity, the Western missionaries and early Korean church leaders borrowed this term to refer to the Christian concept of God. Nowadays, all Korean Christians use it when referring to the Christian concept of God, whereas Korean Catholics opted for the term, *Chonjunim*, the Lord of Heaven in Chinese ideographs, in order to differentiate the Christian God from the indigenous syncretic concept of gods. The adoption of the indigenous term, *Hananim*, enabled Koreans to readily accept the idea of the Christian God in vernacular terms that were deeply rooted in their local life and experience. But *Hananim* could not entirely represent the radically different Christian concept of a transcendent God. The use of the indigenous term would implicate "Korean Christians in a temptation to understand the Christian God syncretistically, drawing flexibly on Confucian, Shamanistic, Buddhist and Christian elements in their received religious traditions" (CS Chung 1997:2).

1.2.1.2 The close relation between gods, man, and nature

In primordial Korean religious consciousness, an indistinct barrier between gods and man applied to the whole universe to the degree that the lines that separated gods, spirits, humans, and nature were very faint and blurred, and they shared a common, intimate life. In this syncretized worldview, one of the main functions of the gods is to take care of all human problems and all important affairs in the house to the degree that all human affairs, such as birth and growth, life and death, success and failure, fortune and misfortune, health and illness, wealth and poverty are completely dependent upon the will of Shamanistic gods. For example, the Birth god gives children, and the god of the Seven Stars raises children and enables people to enjoy a long life. The Higher Official god is in charge of one's property and the General of the gods has the power to drive away misfortune and disaster. In this sense, Shamanism seems to promote fatalism.

However, when we further examine the possibility of humans to appease the gods, and to receive good fortune from them, this fatalistic implication in Korean Shamanism shows the other extreme side of the coin, i.e. indeterminism. Just as the belief in the efficacy of prayers to attain specific objectives is clearly evident in the *Tan'gun* myth, for well-being humans should appease the gods by giving offerings and performing various ceremonies. For example, if people desire a long life, they have to pray to the god of the Seven Stars. Good spirits, like the sun, are believed to bring good fortune to human beings; the reason that a human is born and has food for survival is that a god has given him some property. Thus prayers to gods or good spirits were encouraged to appease them so as to receive a

happy outcome.

The prayer and worship performance was not confined to invisible spirits or a god. With its animistic tendency and unified worldview in mind, the early Korean spiritualized the wondrous phenomena of nature, and worshipped heavenly bodies (sun, moon and stars); natural forces (clouds, rain and wind); the gods of soil and grain; natural objects, such as mountains, trees, rocks and caves; and the spirits of the dead in order to dispel misfortune and invoke good fortune (*cf.* Chung 1997:608).

For this reason, human beings need not be inert recipients of fate but can take measures to improve their situation. After examining the relationship between Shamanism and its influence on the rapid growth of the Korean Pentecostal Church, H Cox (1996:228) insists that Shamanism is never fatalistic:

[Shamanism] holds that the divine power can be brought to bear positively on earthly sorrow and pain, and that human beings need not be inert recipients of fate but can take measures that will improve their situation. Shamanism is not, like some of the so-called higher religions, fatalistic. It does not encourage resignation.

1.2.1.3 The intermediate function of the shaman and the absence of ethics

The intermediate function of the shaman enhances the possibility to change the fate of humans. Shamans, usually spirit-possessed women called *mudang*, played a central role in the magico-religious life of ancient Korean society. The shamans' important role, by virtue of their intimate relation with the supernatural world, is to mediate between the gods and humans, appease gods and drive out evil spirits, so that human beings may receive materialistic fortune (KB Lee 1984:8). As the above *Tan'gun* myth indicates, to the Korean shaman, there is no clear differentiation between the heavenly world of gods and the world of humans. Because of their intermediate position, shamans enjoyed high prestige and commanded the people's respect (Chung 1997:609).

Although Korean shamans are intermediaries between the human and the heavenly worlds, they teach little about the heavenly world. This might contain some ethical implication for human beings. As Son (1983:337) rightly points out, Korean Shamanism has almost no ethical teachings:

Innumerable demons are believed to bless and curse men according to the demons' whims. Neither blessing nor curses are morally deserved. The demons are believed to be manipulated by shamans using special occult techniques and offering, which amount to bribes. Both blessings and curses are entirely worldly Shamans teach little about the next world.

Because of this indifference to general ethics, Korean Shamanism compelled people to concentrate on propitiating the spirits, in particular the evil ones, through proper rituals with repeated prayers and offerings, rather than pursuing communal welfare and ethical transformation. This ethical indifference and concentration on material blessings are blamed when Christian scholars criticize Shamanism's syncretistic influence upon the formation of Korean Christianity (JY Lee 1997:81; CS Chung 1997:33; Jang 1998; Son 1999; HS Kim 1999).

1.2.1.4 Shamanism's resilient influence on the Korean subconsciousness

Until the beginning of the period of the Three Kingdoms (1st century BC–7th century AD), Shamanism held sway in the ancient Korean society, and shamans were even allowed to be rulers simultaneously (Cho 1985:24). But after the introduction of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism from China, shamans gradually lost their privileges and, as a result, Shamanism survived chiefly as a religion of the people.

From the end of the Koryo dynasty (936-1392 AD), Shamanism became a target of attack by Confucian scholars. And during the Yi dynasty, which upheld an exclusively Confucian political ideology, Shamanism suffered a tactical persecution by the government so that the shamans were degraded to one of the lowest classes of society. When the Japanese occupied Korea, it was extensively suppressed by the invaders, since they officially intended to obliterate this native religion. After the liberation of Korea from Japanese colonization, Korean Shamanism was immediately confronted by another kind of oppression, this time from within. Korea's intellectuals, educated in the western way of thinking, regarded Shamanism as an embarrassment, while Korean Christians fiercely criticized shamans and their followers as devotees of the devil. Also, children of shamans became the object of ridicule by their schoolmates simply because their parents were shamans (Cho 1985:25).

However, the degradation of Korean Shamanism never implied that the Shamanistic worldview had been erased from the Korean subconsciousness. One of the interesting characteristics of Korean Shamanism is that it easily coexists with other religions, such as Buddhism, Confucianism, and Christianity. Son (1983:337), a prominent Christian scholar, says, "Even though it has been pushed aside in the course of Korean history by Buddhism, Confucianism, and Christianity, Shamanism's resilience has been remarkable. The Korean value system, social practice, family life and political life all reflect the influence of Shamanism." As DS Ryu, a major Korean theologian, remarked, the Korean mind-set is basically Shamanistic. For this reason, "the study of Korean shamanism is a shortcut to the understanding of the structure of the Korean people's consciousness," and even "to the understanding Korean preaching" (HY Cho 1985:28; JY Lee 1997:31).

1.2.2 The Taoist tradition

When we try to understand Korean religious heritages, in relation to which Christianity has been being formulated in the Korean context, we firstly need to examine the following three religious heritages: Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism. In addition to the indigenous Shamanistic tradition, these three imported religions have exercised an extensive influence upon Korean history and culture. This not only applies to Korea; also in Chinese history, no Chinese embraces exclusively either Confucianism, Taoism or Buddhism. The phrase, “three religions make one family,” was voiced by ancient people of China, and is true also in neighbouring nations like Korea (Byun 1985:6; JE Lee 1985:19). Each of these three heritages will be briefly surveyed.

Laozi is the recognized founder of Taoism; his expositions of the *dao*, meaning the way, are contained in his *Daodejing* (*Book of the way and its virtue*), the basic scripture of Taoism. When Taoism’s religious group first appeared in 2nd century China, Laozi and *Daodejing* were already the principle elements of Taoism (Byun 1986:5). During the Korean Three Kingdoms’ period (3-7 cen. AD), Taoism was introduced to Korea along with two other religions, Confucianism and Buddhism (Song 1986:13). In his book, *Religious thought of Taoism in Korea* (1984), CH Cha defines the concept of Taoism as follows:

Taoism, based on the folk faith of ancient times, centers around the theory of immortalism with an addition of logical reasoning or the theories of Taoists, divination, Yin-yang, five elements, apocalyptic prophecy, astrology etc., reinforced with shamanistic faith. Then, in an imitation of the ideological system and structure of Buddhism, it is characterized as a version of religion in pursuit of longevity and immortality for the attainment of secular gains (cited in 1986:56).

When Taoism was introduced to ancient Korea, it did not cause much conflict with indigenous Shamanism, already rooted in Korean soil, for both shared a similar belief system. One of the thoughts that ancient Koreans held can be summed up as ‘the idea of the union of god and man’ in search of a perfect man or as a belief in longevity in the secular world, which is reflected in the Tan’gun myth. As pointed out earlier, Tan’gun is a shaman-king or a perfect god-man who ruled a harmonious organic cosmos of gods, men, and all living things. He can also be considered as a prototype of the ancient people, who lived in an all-inclusive, personal cosmos where humans formed a triad with heaven and earth (Chung 1997:17). This reasoning may apply to the Taoist belief in longevity, immortality, secular benefits, elimination of ills and evocation of happiness (Song 1986:14). Therefore, through this ideological matrix, Taoism could be grafted to the Korean original mindset without any serious friction.

However, after being introduced into Korea (during the Koryo dynasty [935-1392] Buddhism was the official religion, and the Choson dynasty's [1392-1872] state ideology was Confucianism), Taoism never attained the status of a national or organized religion, or a separate school of philosophy in Korea (Grayson 1989:64). The Choson dynasty even attempted to eliminate the folk faiths of Taoism, Buddhism and Shamanism by branding them as heresies (Song 1986:17). So it became submerged in the daily life of the populace as a kind of folk faith by providing various pseudoscientific or magical techniques and religious faith systems, such as the theories of *yin* and *yang*, the Five Elements, geomancy (*pungsu*), prognostication, and a pseudoscientific regimen to acquire longevity. These will be surveyed briefly in our study.

First of all, *Dao*, i.e. the way of the ultimate reality, which Taoism seeks to realize, is very difficult to express in words. It is the undifferentiated, indefinable Source of all things and virtues. It is simultaneously transcendent and immanent, everywhere and nowhere, nothing and everything, the source and the end. As a more comprehensive concept, immortality is suggested as the goal that Taoism seeks. Byun (1986:4) describes this as follows:

An immortal is a human being living in perfect peace, with no self-interest or individual ambition. Such a being is always stable in mind and is not bound by anything and its ultimate being is the very heart of nature, of non-action. The nature of non-action is the state of eternity since it is in union with the Great Life of the universe.

Taoism regards the idea of 'non-action nature,' or 'no artificial action and being natural and spontaneous' as extremely important. And this immortal being is considered to be in the most perfect harmonious union with the Great Life of the universe. With this ideal in mind, Korean literary men of the classical periods produced many works that portrayed and sang the life of transcendental seclusionists in immortality (JE Lee 1986:25; Chung 1997:611).

However, although this transcendental seclusion seems to be contrary to survival and the struggle of ordinary life, Taoism does not negate a more practical gimmick. Geomancy (*pungsu*), prognostication, and a pseudoscientific regimen to acquire longevity were recommended as more practical techniques to lead to ultimate immortality in this world. Thanks to these practical, plausible gimmicks, Taoism could easily influence the populace.

Among various Taoist techniques, *Pungsu* (literally meaning wind and water) was, and still is, considered as the most important divination for selecting the right residence for the living (i.e. house or town) and for death (tomb) in harmony with the essence of the cosmic forces, *yin* and *yang*, and with the five essential elements. Motivated not only by the syncretic Confucian ideal of reverence for ancestors, but also by the magical and utilitarian

idea of Shamanism that the selection of the right tombs for the deceased would ensure good fortune for the family, people took geomantic *Pungsu* very seriously (Chung 1997:612; CJ Choi 1986:42). Even Song-Gye Yi, the founder of the new dynasty, ordered the best geomantic experts in the country to recommend a site for his new capital, and the present Seoul was selected at that time (CJ Choi 1986:43-44).

In addition to the geomantic technique to select the right place to live, Korean people have long believed in, and practised, divination and prognostication interpreted by the theory of *yin* and *yang*, the Five elements, and the Book of Changes. Through these beliefs and practices, the masses believed that they could manipulate the fundamental forces of the cosmos and attain their immediate goals on earth: health, peace, longevity, and good fortune. Towards the middle of the 19th century, prognostication, such as *Chong Kam Nok*, exerted a great influence among the people – a symptom of imminent social change. The message was the impending fall of the Choson Yi dynasty, to be replaced by a *Chung* family, who would establish a millennial reign. The prophecy evoked fanatical responses from the masses and the socially disinherited, by unleashing extremely unrealistic hopes and fears with the promise of a miraculous change (Chung 1997:612).

As Korean Taoism concerns long life and semi-immortality, efforts for attaining physical immortality resulted in stimulating the technical development of alchemy and a regimen. Detailed means employed for this purpose were (1) respiratory, (2) gymnastics (3) regimen (4) sexual techniques, (5) elixirs and pharmaceutical preparations, and others (Byun 1986:11). Because of these practical beliefs and plausible techniques, Taoism still exerts an influence on Koreans. According to Ho Jin Chun,² a prominent Korean missionologist, a 1995 survey of the “Korea Prognostication Organization” indicated that 200,000 to 300,000 fortune-tellers are active in Korea, and 38% of the population has consulted a fortuneteller. He even points out that many respectable Christians also do so. According to *Voice*, a Korean Christian monthly magazine, only 38% of Christians agreed when questioned, “Is prognostication through computer on the street spiritual adultery?” Another 31% of the Christians disagreed, and 31% of them were undecided (1996 vol. 8).³

1.2.3 Buddhism

Buddhism, which originated in India, came to Korea from China during the period of the Three Kingdoms, 372 AD in Kokuryo, 384 in Baekjae, and 535 in Shilla. While these Three Kingdoms grew into an ancient kingdom in Korea, they required a religion developed for

² <http://myhome.hananet.net/~gabichung/jum1-7.html>

³ http://www.voice21.com/online/8/8_05.htm

the spiritual unity of their people. Buddhism also provided a politically unifying force for each kingdom at a time when each royal house was trying to consolidate its power over and against divisive tribal forces. This was especially true in Shilla where Buddhism was combined with the development of the royal family to play a leading role as the national ideology (RKI 1995:32). When Shilla united the three kingdoms in 680 AD, the Shilla Buddhist belief developed well, producing several eminent monks. However, the Shilla dynasty started to decline from the end of the eighth century, owing to internal conflicts within the ruling class in the capital and the rise of powerful local warlords. Buddhism also lost much of its earlier vitality and creativity (Keel 1993:12).

After the decline of the Shilla dynasty, Buddhism reached its apex during the Koryo dynasty (918-1392) under the patronage of the state. The Koryo aristocracy continued to regard Buddhism not merely as an otherworldly religion, but as a faith that would influence the fortunes of the state as well as individuals in the contemporary world. However, Koryo Buddhism gradually declined. Under the patronage of the state, the monks became increasingly involved in politics. The privileges of monastic landholding and tax exemptions not only corrupted Buddhism but also undermined the national economy. The inevitable crisis came at about the end of the dynasty when a new attitude toward Buddhism started to develop among Confucian scholars and officials. They were alarmed by the collapse of the basis of the Koryo economic order and the ever-shrinking government revenue due to the sequestering of large landholding by both the powerful officials in the capital and numerous influential Buddhist monasteries throughout the country. Contemporaneous with this was the introduction into Koryo of Neo-Confucianism, which took a critical stance towards Buddhism (Keel 1993:14). The corruption of Buddhism became one of the dominant factors in the downfall of the Koryo dynasty (Chung 1997:613; JR Shim 1993:52).

Against this background, it was inevitable that Buddhism would suffer losses in the subsequent Choson dynasty (1392-1910), whose state religion was replaced by Neo-Confucianism. The Confucian literate, who shaped the edifice of the new society on a strictly rational basis, regarded the Buddhism monastic ideal as being at odds with the institutions of family, state, and the practice of social virtues. As a result, Buddhism, together with the folk Shamanism, was treated as heterodoxy, its monks and nuns were forced to withdraw from cities and towns, and a registration system was instituted to prevent an increase in the number of monks and temples. Thus, their social status ranked no higher than that of prostitutes, butchers, and Shamanistic sorcerers (JR Shim 1993:52).

The suppression of Buddhism, however, does not necessarily mean the end of its influence

in Korea. Through various appropriate transformations, Buddhism has exerted its resilient influence upon Koreans. Among several reasons for its survival, CS Chung (1982:614-615) points out two: its syncretic propensity; and its transformation to a mystical, eschatological and messianic religion.

As originally developed by the enlightenment of Siddartha Gautama, the Buddha's real name, the ultimate concern of Buddhism was neither to acquire joy from this material world, nor to find God Himself; rather it sought to be the Ultimate Reality itself. In other words, the fundamental aim of Buddhism can be said to be, in the condition of *nirvana*, to attain emancipation from all worldly bondage arising from the duality of birth and death (Franck 1991:65). However, as Buddhism has been compromised to accommodate the Korean context, this Buddhist concern for the ultimate reality took syncretic shape in relation to other religions, such as the Korean Shamanism, Taoism, and Confucianism.

For Buddhism, life is full of suffering. To exist means to suffer: suffering and existence are united in two different appearances (JY Lee 1997:78). Life is considered as inescapably bound up in the transmigration of souls and the rule of *karma*, a Buddhist notion of reward in a future life. Songdam (1989:48), a contemporary Korean Buddhism master, preaches as follows:

You create your own karma, so whatever actions you set in motion, the consequences will inevitably come back to you. When a person walks, his shadow inevitably follows. No matter how many lifetimes you change the form of your body, there is no way you can escape your karma: eventually you must reap what you sow.

Under this inevitable bondage, human beings, in this life, must do their best for a better next life, through 'merit-making' (*Kongdok*), or offering (*Kongyang*). The Korean Buddhism term, '*Kongyang*,' generally refers to a wide variety of offerings and commemorative activities commonly practised during Buddhist ceremonial activities. Although Buddhism emphasizes that everyone can attain a Buddha-nature without a mediator, ironically "the fundamental motivation behind *Kongyang* is to accumulate merit by making offerings and to receive benefit and protection from Buddha" (YS Hong 1991:51,57). These Buddhist endeavours have a latent syncretic utilitarian mentality that fits in well with the Korean materialistic ethos, which allows for mixing such heterogeneous aspects; for instance, *karma* blended well with the fatalistic Taoist idea of luck. In turn, Taoist magic, geomancy, and talismans found their way into Buddhism that, furthermore, blended well enough to include Confucian filial piety and ancestor worship. Korean Buddhism even started to include offerings to one's living parents, and to their spirits after their departure for a better rebirth in the next life (Chung 1997:614; YS Hong

1991:51; Shim 1993:52). Through these syncretic transformations, Buddhism was capable of exerting its resilient influence upon Koreans even during the hostile Choson dynasty. According to CS Chung (1997:615), this syncretic character still remains in contemporary Korean Buddhism, so that in many Buddhist temples, Shamanistic and Taoist gods, such as the mountain gods and the god of the Seven Stars, are worshipped along with Buddha. It is certain that “the other-world elements of Buddhism have been compromised to accommodate the this-world-affirming element of Shamanism, Taoism, and Confucianism” (ibid).

Another important reason for the survival of Buddhism in a hostile society was the rapid growth of Pure Land practices in the 19th century. The major sect of Sŏn Buddhism (the Korean version of Zen), even while emphasizing immediate, personal exercise of self-awakening, also taught about the Pure Land, stating that one can rely on nothing in this world of despair except the compassion of the *Buddha Amitābha* (Infinite Life), and his associate *Bodhisattva* (an enlightened being). Just as the Taoist prognostication exerted great influence among the people in times of social unrest towards the end of the Choson dynasty, the Buddhist teaching and prophesy of Pure Land, with its mystical and eschatological tones, also became very popular. Though politically revolutionary and, as such, opposed by the ruling authorities, this shift of the Buddhist practice helped to alleviate the suffering of the oppressed masses (Chung 1997:615; Shim 1993:53).

Through this syncretic propensity, materialistic combination, and alleviating potential to soothe anxiety at moments of crisis in history, Buddhism has exerted its resilient influence upon Koreans. The recent Buddhist renewal movements, partly motivated by competition with Christianity, have generated new or refurbished Buddhist institutions of higher learning, youth activities, social welfare and human services, in addition to more Buddhist scholarships and publications. The 1995 government census indicates that Buddhism is the largest of Korean religions: it had approximately 10,321,000 adherents (23% of the total population) (Gwak 2000:40,147).

1.2.4 Neo-Confucianism

One may wonder whether Confucianism should be described as a strict religion, merely a kind of social morality, or an ideal political philosophy. No matter what we may deem it to be, no person has had a more extensive influence on China or other neighbouring countries, as Confucius. Strictly speaking, Confucianism is far older than Confucius, who himself claimed to be only the editor and compiler of almost all his books. He edited extensive materials, such as poems and history of previous ages, but he first absorbed all into his own philosophy, corrected them, and then practically recoinced them. Thus, although he may not

have made many changes to the material, the very fact of his having sorted out, expurgated and rearranged the ancient writings to suit the conditions of his own times, makes him a great sage (Clark 1961:91). His creative works have been arranged in the Four Books (the *Analects of Confucius*, the *Book of Mencius*, the *Great learning*, and the *Doctrine of the mean*), and the Five Classics (the *Book of changes*; the *Odes*; the *History*; the *Ceremonials*; and the *Annals*).

Confucianism, together with the introduction of Buddhism and Taoism, appeared in Korea as early as the time of the Three Kingdoms. By 372 AD Kokuryo dynasty had founded a university for the teaching of Confucian classics and history. During the reign of King *Keunchoko* (371-374), eminent Baekjae scholars, such as Ajikki and Wang In, were sent to Japan to introduce Confucianism (CH Park 1963:5). During the seventh century of Shilla, as a good example of the influence of Confucian belief upon early Korea, the teachings of Confucianism blossomed in the form of *Hwarangdo*, which means the way of the flower boys, as a kind of ruling principle in the education of the youth (DH Kim 1963:17). In the Koryo dynasty, the government enforced the Civil Service Examination System, which examined the Confucian Classics in order to select capable officials on the basis of their competence in scholarly knowledge of Confucianism and Chinese literature, and, furthermore, established a national university to teach Confucianism. However, it was not before the Choson dynasty that Confucianism made any substantial imprint upon the masses as the old native cults, Buddhism, Shamanism, and Taoism largely overshadowed it.

The Choson dynasty (1392-1910) was the golden age of Confucianism in Korea. From that time to the present, a period of some 500 years, Confucian ethics and philosophy have been the guiding principle and dominating factor in Korean social, cultural, and family life (M Daniels 1979:46). An interesting fact is that Confucianism did not take as strong a hold on the culture in any other society in East Asia as in Korea during the Choson dynasty (Grayson 1989:23). The Confucianism that flourished during the Choson dynasty is known as Neo-Confucianism, a mixture of classic Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism, based chiefly on the teaching and authority of Chu His (1131-1200 BC). Two focal values, loyalty to king and filial piety, and another five constant virtues, i.e. benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and sincerity, sustained Neo-Confucianism. Besides, the Confucian moral rules that governed the five human relations, i.e. father and son, master and servant, husband and wife, young and old and friend, have been the moral basis of social life in Korea (DH Kim 1963:17-18). Among the various aspects that Neo-Confucianism imprinted on the Korean consciousness, the following three aspects deserve mention in our study: ancestor worship, respect for learning, and exclusive, rigid conservatism.

Firstly, based upon the focal value of loyalty to the king and filial piety for parents and ancestors, and with the collusion of the syncretic Buddhism and Taoism, Neo-Confucianism promoted various ancestor worships, the result of extending filial piety to deceased parents (Yoo 1987:15). As Confucianism settled down during the Choson dynasty, all Koreans, from the royal government to peasant families, started to follow ancestor worship. The average family of the literati performed sacrificial rites on more than forty occasions a year (KP Choi 1991:61). Even lower classes performed these rites at least four times a year. Those who did not keep these norms were not considered to be normal members of society. The fundamental purpose of Confucian ancestor rites is to express a spirit of filial piety by offering something in return for the benefits received from parents and ancestors and by keeping their memories alive. Through this ancestor worship and rites, men not only encounter 'spiritual beings,' they also foster human solidarity, deepening a sense of rootedness, and awakening a sense of duty to parents and ancestors. However, we need to note that the emphasis on indebtedness or repaying ancestors for benefits received is not only Confucian, but also indigenous Shamanistic and Buddhist in spirit (Chung 1997:17). In time, this Neo-Confucianism promoted some positive morals, such as reverence for the aged, or a firm influence of morals in society, but also negative influences, such as androcentrism, family-centred egoism, and a rigid hierarchical society (Chung 1982:618).

The second remarkable aspect of Neo-Confucianism is its respect for learning. Yi Song-gye, the founder of the Choson dynasty, adopted the Confucian system of education and government examinations. In almost every village, private elementary schools were founded where the study of Confucian texts began. Later, in all districts, there were government schools where the Confucian classics were taught (M Daniels 1979:47). All the boys were keen to attain a Confucian education and the popularity of these studies resulted in schools springing up all over the country. Being a scholar was synonymous with Confucianism. This educational desire, related to the Confucian system of legitimation, became stronger and stronger century after century, so that Confucianism became even stronger in Korea than it was in Confucius's own country, China.

In addition to the Confucian education system, the Choson dynasty elevated men of ability to government posts by means of an examination system similar to that of China and the previous Koryo dynasty. Classified into civil and military divisions, in addition to other specialities, the administration work of the Choson government developed into various kinds and grades, each having its own examination (Kim 1963:20). Closely related to the filial piety that Confucianism promoted, the achievement of success in the examination for politics and honour in government became the highest expression of filial piety, and a government position became an end itself, rather than a means to serve the country and the

people. Under this “systems of legitimation” and “plausibility structure” that make present arrangements seem both legitimate and justifiable, it was inevitable that all Koreans would have respect for learning.

As Neo-Confucianism was the only learning that the government’s Civil Service examinations demanded, differences in academic tradition arising from the wide dissemination of learning, not only in the capital, but also in the provinces, led to the establishment of schools based upon the academic tradition and eventually resulted in the seed of bloody political party strife (CH Park 1963:9). All these negative results were nourished by the exclusive self-righteous finality that emerged from Chu Hsi’s idea of the traditional-orthodox-way.

Chu Hsi established Tradition or Orthodoxy by writing commentary on the Four Books. Confucianism thus insists that Confucianism is not just one of the learnings, but the absolute and only one. Since Confucian learning is the only and absolute standard by which to judge the human and non-human, civilization and barbarism, truth and non-truth, justice and injustice, ruler and the ruled, Gentlemen-Scholar and a small-mind, a faithful retainer and a usurper, filial son and impious son, any one who criticizes or stands against Confucian Learning is to be condemned as disloyal, unjust, in other words, a heretic (OH Shin 1982:51).

This intolerance is not limited to repudiating what it spurns as the superstition of Buddhism and Taoism, which was its main thrust at the outset of the Choson dynasty. Neo-Confucianism, as a system, even does not allow a new interpretation of its own classical literature, which veered from those of the great Confucian scholars, especially from Chu Hsi. Thus, Neo-Confucianism bred a thought-pattern of reactionism or rigid conservatism among people educated under its system. Scholars and politicians continuously tried to imitate their ancestry and looked back fondly at the past. Trying to find happiness or progress in the future or a new world was categorically condemned as a fallacy or heresy (SY Hyun 1977:9).

Due to this exclusive rigid spirit, the elected government officers who were nurtured by the schools that taught a slightly different interpretation and opinion could not avoid the bloody political party strife. The issue of the Rites of Confucianism and their different interpretative views also became a controversial point and the cause of bloody struggles for political hegemony among bureaucrats from the end of the 17th century to the early 18th century. It was far removed from the positive practice of Confucianism and focused on the wrong goal (CH Park 1963:13).

However, being confronted by social change and the intrusion of Western thought, a mere

emphasis on morality could not solve the social problems of the day. This caused some intellectuals to develop the so-called *Shilhak* (the “Real Learning School”), a kind of Confucian science that gave priority to daily practicality and objective rationality. Assimilated more closely with the practical spirit of Wang Yang-ming, *Shilhak* tried to transcend the stifling boundaries of Neo-Confucianism, and was actually related to scientific knowledge. This entailed an encyclopaedic study of all things, reflecting the influence of Western science (JT Keum 1989:4). However, instead of bringing Wang’s practical spirit into the open, realists merely amalgamated it. And, more importantly, because of the mainstream conservative Neo-Confucianism at that time, the ‘Real Learning School’ could not turn the general trend, and the Choson dynasty could not but fail to cope with the West’s invasive flood and, especially, the invasion of Japan at the end of 19th century.

One of the reasons for Neo-Confucianism’s failure to cope with the invasive flood can be found in the fact that Korean Confucianism was maintained and developed mainly by those who held vested rights, ignoring the benefits of the masses. Thus, although orthodox Confucianism penetrated deeply into the lives of the literate through moral education and the exemplary life of the *yangban* (scholar-officials), it remained but a system of moral teaching that lacked the personal, spontaneous quality of the folk religions. Confucian political, social, and religious thought and rites remained too complex for the uneducated masses to grasp and follow (Chung 1997:617). Thus, some modern Confucianists advocate its renovation in order to suit the contemporary changing situation.

What are the three critical problems? In the first place, our Confucianists are least concerned with the benefit of the masses; they are preoccupied with the interest of the ruler. Secondly, they have no positive will to renovate society following in the footsteps of Confucius, nor do they have a will to actively propagate Confucianism. Lastly, our Confucianists are not pursuing the school of Wang Yang-ming to discover intrinsic truth in a simple and easy way. Rather they favor the school of Chu Hsi who tends to adhere to non-essential trivialities (US Pak 1981:31).

After the Japanese colonization (1910-1945) and the Korean War (1950-1953), on the one hand, Korean culture and its social system started to undergo rapid change owing to rapid catastrophic industrialization, urbanization and democratization. Today, the younger generation does not utterly accept the Confucian tradition of loyalty, filial duty, chastity and the principles for human relationships, nor do they maintain the formality of the so-called four great family rites and Confucian manner of courtesy. The older generation object strongly to these young people (CH Park 1963:41). On the other hand, Confucian beliefs and values still persist as an important part of Korean culture and society. The Confucian

heritage emphasizes, among other values, a tenacious memory of the past (customs, habits and thought patterns); paternal authority; family collectivism; reverence for the aged; learning and personal cultivation; legalistic conservatism; a hierarchical society; rigidity of thought; and strict social behaviour (Chung 1997:618). In the same vein, Yoo (1987:14) correctly points out that, more than any other religion, Confucianism has shaped the social and political forms of Korean culture.

1.2.5 Korean Protestant Christianity

As examined thus far, the traditional religions, such as Shamanism, Taoism, Buddhism, and Neo-Confucianism, have been blended with other heritages, and have influenced various Korean aspects. However, as the Choson dynasty's tide declined, it revealed that these traditional religions had lost their vitality in their rapidly changing society and had failed to offer religious meaning for the lives of the masses during the socio-political crisis. People were in a state of total despair. The first Protestant missionaries came to Korea in 1884 under these circumstances. By means of their patient, law-abiding approach, they succeeded in gaining the active support of Korean young, energetic, progressive leaders. As one means of propagating the Gospel, the missionaries undertook medical work, contributing much in this way to Korean society. They also played an important role by beneficial Western thought, and by arousing a national consciousness among the Korean people. Since Protestant Christianity was regarded as a religion with a clear ideology that appealed to the people as timely and pertinent to meet their various needs, all classes in Korea most warmly received the Gospel. But most early Korean Protestant leaders regarded the Korean religions as useless and powerless. They believed that only Christianity held the dynamic spiritual power to enable the people to direct themselves towards a new, purposeful life (CS Chung 1996:528-529). Studying the growth of the Presbyterian Church in Korea, Shearer (1966:38) found: "From its very first days there were evidences of unusual growth. All eyes were turned and many saw in the Church the only hope of the country."

The disposition of the Korean Church in its early years was characterized by conservative, evangelical Christianity, which could be attributed to the early American missionaries of the Presbyterian faith (Gwak 2000:156). In 1885, Horace Underwood, an American Presbyterian (Northern) missionary, came to Korea and, in 1901, Pyongyang Presbyterian Theological Seminary, the first in Korea, was established. Dr Samuel Moffett, the first president of the Seminary, was clearly conservative and Calvinistic. Dr Charles Allen Clark was another strong influence in directing the Reformed theological and doctrinal basis of the Korean Church. Under the influence of these two missionaries in particular, the early

church in Korea possessed an exact knowledge of the distinctive precepts of the Reformed faith or Calvinism.

However, in the 1930s, many younger Korean theologians, Presbyterians in particular, were educated in Japan or in the United States. Then, the Korean Presbyterian Churches that belonged to the main trend of the Korean Church had not yet split, but opposing opinions on specific theological ideas emerged. Hyūng-Ryong Park and Jae-Joon Kim were two representative theologians who held the most conflicting opinions concerning the view of the Bible. Hyūng-Ryong Park, a representative scholar of the conservative theology in Korea, was educated from 1923 to 1926 at the old Princeton Seminary, and was influenced by the theology of Gresham Machen, Charles Hodge and Louis Berkhof. In spite of his study under Gresham Machen, Jae-Joon Kim's theological views were already set while he was in Japan, where liberalism was prevalent. As a result of these two theologians' acute theological confrontation, the Korean Presbyterian Church was finally divided into two camps in 1953. Since then, these two Presbyterian camps have held extremely different views on issues of the church's social responsibility, and of dialogue with other traditional religions.

Yoo (1987:3-4) classifies the mainstream Korean Church into the following three categories: the conservative Presbyterian, the liberal Presbyterian, and the Pentecostal Churches. The first camp comprises the conservative evangelical Presbyterian churches that were nurtured mainly by the works of two great Reformed theologians, Hyūng-Ryong Park and Yune-Sun Park. The theological propensity of both Parkses' theology was towards the extended line of the Puritanical Reformed theological tradition, which Park Hyūng-Ryong acquired from the old Princeton Seminary, and Yune-Sun Park from the Westminster Theological Seminary. Hyūng-Ryong Park and Yune-Sun Park are renowned for their monumental achievements in the fields of, respectively, systematic theology and biblical theology. HR Park wrote a seven volume series, *Systematic Theology* and YS Park's magnum opus was his commentaries on the Bible's 66 books. The influence of both theologians upon the mainline Presbyterian Churches in Korea is so remarkable that to say that mainline Presbyterian churches in Korea are still characterized by their theological propensity is no overstatement (Song 1999:27). Due to their theological influence from the early stage of the Korean church history until the present, roughly speaking, two-thirds of the total number of Christians in Korea belongs to Presbyterian Churches, and most of these Churches have a conservative outlook.

The second camp comprises liberal churches that insist on the liberty of the people and social justice with the social Gospel. However, it should be noted that social activism has

been a phenomenon limited to a minority of Korean churches. If this group had been considered as one of the main stream in the recent Korean Church history, and had helped the church to fulfil its social responsibility during the democratic struggle of the 1980s in Korea, then the failure of the social responsibility would not have been raised as an important reason for the numerical decline of the Korean Church after the 1980s (*cf.* NH Yang 1993; CD Gwak 2000:134). Although this camp has, at best, been limited to a minority of Korean Christians, (whose theological propensity still needs critical evaluation) through Christian activism for socio-political justice during the 1970s and 1980s in Korea, the liberal church reminded the conservative side, which kept silent under the aegis of the theory of separation between religion and state, of the important social responsibility of Christianity.

The third camp comprises the Pentecostal Churches that seek, *inter alia*, the Holy Spirit movement, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and material blessing. As this is a brief survey of Korean Christianity, this last camp merits only brief mention in our study. Just as alien religions, such as Taoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism, after being introduced into Korea, could not avoid the Koreans' practical need to receive selectively an alien religion through "the window" of their own religious consciousness, so Christianity also had to face, and be transformed by syncretic characteristics of the Korean religious consciousness. A salient example can be found in Korean Pentecostalism, the third remarkable camp of Korean Christianity. Beneath the surface of the Korean Pentecostalism, one can easily detect traces of a syncretic, especially Shamanistic, tendency. This camp revealed its features from the 1960s onwards. After having suffered from colonization and the Korean War, the masses in the after-war society experienced a will to live. While rising in this social atmosphere, several Korean Pentecostal Churches began to peddle material blessings in such a way that they attracted remarkable numbers, and other churches also began to be infected by the message of a syncretic material blessing (CS Chung 1982:620; You 1987).

1.2.6 General characteristics of the Korean religious heritage

Thus far, we have examined the five main Korean religious heritages, i.e. Shamanism, Taoism, Buddhism, Neo-Confucianism, and Christianity. In this section, we need to summarize briefly the general characteristics of the Korean religious heritages and their influence on the formation of Korean religious consciousness. The general characteristics are: a Shamanistic tendency, syncretism with other religions, otherworldliness with a pessimistic worldview, and exclusive, rigid conservatism.

According to CS Chung (1997: 624-625), one of the salient characteristics in the Korean religious heritage is its Shamanistic amalgamation. Shamanism existed even before the

appearance of the more advanced religions, and has always been at the centre of the magico-religious life of the traditional Korean society. Korean Shamanism centres on bifocal concepts of 'material blessing' and the 'mediating role of the shaman.' As a mediator between human-beings and the pantheon of spiritual forces, the shaman could manipulate the latter to ensure peoples' health, wellbeing, good fortune and longevity. Beliefs and practices linked to the shaman's mediation with the world of spirits and gods (Shamanism), constitutes the enduring core of Korean religiosity. Alien religions, such as Taoism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and even Christianity, had to be modified and adapted to indigenous Shamanistic elements before they could take root in Korea's religious cultural soil.

The most marked characteristic of popular Korean Christianity, whether Protestant or Catholic, is its affirmation of this-worldly values such as physical health, material abundance and good fortune here and now. By accommodating themselves to this dominant religious proclivity for affirming the values of this world, Korean churches have unwittingly, and sometimes deliberately, adopted shamanistic practices. The greater the accommodation, the more the beliefs and rituals that appear on the surface to be Christian are at bottom shamanistic in substance (CS Chung 1997:34).

By catering to people's this-worldly and utilitarian concerns such as health, longevity and good fortune, Shamanism has profoundly influenced the culture and personality of the Korean people. Thus, as confirmed in 1.2.1.4, "the Korean mind-set is basically shamanistic", and to a large extent, "the Korean value system, social practice, family life and political life all reflect the influence of Shamanism" (Son 1983:337).

The second salient factor of the Korean religious heritage is its syncretic merging with other religions. None of these religions has been able to continue permanently as a dominant tradition, entirely eclipsing the others. Buddhism in the Silla and Koryo dynasties, and Neo-Confucianism in the Choson dynasty seemed to have attained dominant positions, but neither could entirely overwhelm the others; eventually they all merged into a synthetic whole in the spiritual life of the people.

For instance, the Buddhist idea of reward in future life blended well with the fatalistic Taoist idea of luck, while in turn Taoist magic, geomancy, and talisman found their way into Buddhism. Confucian filial piety and ancestor worship were, according to the syncretic Korean Buddhists, acceptable ways of earning merit in this life for the better rebirth in the next life. The Buddhist figure Avalokitesvara (*Kwanūm*) was popular, because this bodhisattva was used by women who wished to have sons. Such a role of providing sons was seen as a natural adjunct to the Confucian ideal of a continuing family system (Shim 1993:52).

Under these circumstances, although Confucian scholars and Buddhist monks were visible, the terms 'Confucian' and 'Buddhist' themselves were meaningless (Kang 1998:104). Thus it is not unusual for a Korean to adhere to all these different traditions simultaneously, without any sense of incongruity.

The third characteristic of Korean religiosity is evident in the apolitical and otherworldly tendency with a pessimistic worldview regarding socio-political responsibility. Although Shamanistic religiosity has exerted such an extensive influence driving Koreans to seek worldly values, such as health, wellbeing, good fortune and longevity, as regards believers' socio-political responsibility, they show a totally different attitude, i.e. an apolitical and otherworldly attitude with a pessimistic worldview. It is not an exaggeration to say that Korean religious heritages have nurtured this apolitical and otherworldly tendency. For example, the old Korean religions of Shamanism and Buddhism ignore the socio-political sphere, make claims on the mind only, thus they have a distinctively apolitical and otherworldly character. Shamanism is only interested in placating evil spirits as a means to receive and enjoy material blessings and happiness in this world. Buddhism in Korea only seeks deliverance from this world of suffering and sorrow. Therefore, both promote the idea that religion and politics are radically separate (Seu 1992:87). Although Neo-Confucianism addresses the socio-political sphere as well as the mind, we need to pay attention to the fact that this Confucianism in Korea was maintained and developed mainly by those who held vested rights, and Confucian socio-political philosophy was too complex for the uneducated masses to grasp, so that it remained only a system of moral teaching that lacked the personal, spontaneous quality of the masses (Chung 1997:617). The religious heritage's apolitical and otherworldly tendency and pessimistic worldview had a soil into which the depoliticizing politics of the early conservative Puritanical missionaries could rather easily transplant their conservative Presbyterian Churches whose members comprise two-thirds of the total number of Christians in Korea.

The fourth characteristic of Korean religious experience is evident in its exclusive, rigid conservatism. According to Grayson (1989:271), Korean religious experience on the whole tends to be conservative by nature.

This conservative tendency may explain why the folk religion, such as Shamanism, has survived tenaciously for such a long period without forming itself into a new religious body, as did the folk religions of China and Japan, which eventually became religious Taoism and Shinto respectively (Grayson 1989:272).

For example, Sōn Buddhism in Korea, in spite of its Shamanistic transformation, is an attempt to return to the original or primal form of Buddhism, and has been the dominant

and typical form of monastic Buddhism in Korea for a thousand years. Likewise, Confucianism in Korea has been only Chu His's thoughts, to the exclusion of all other forms. Under the influence of the rigid conservative Neo-Confucianism, Korean Christianity sometimes displays its conservative nature in its theology and practice.

The mottoes of the Confucian students were "Excellent is the one who succeeds the old," "Understanding the new by studying the old," and, most startlingly, "Write but not to create." A close look at Korea's early Christian scholars, men who were brought up under the Neo-Confucian influence, reveals a carry-over of this filial conservatism (Seu 1992:268).

Thus, in Grayson's view, it is a remarkable feature of Korean Christianity's experience that even the most sophisticated and liberal Christians are considered to be conservative compared to their Western counterparts. "There is a clear tendency to preserve the doctrine and practices of Christianity as they were received a hundred years ago" (Grayson 1989:272). In comparing the second characteristic, i.e. syncretism that easily accepts alien factors, rigid conservatism that strongly adheres to its own heritages only seems to coexist without relevance to one another. In order to understand the reason why both aspects coexist, we firstly need to understand what "face" means to an Asian and to the Korean. "The concept of 'face' 'saving face' or 'losing face,' is often described as an Asian preoccupation or social obsession. 'Face' refers to 'personal integrity, good character, and the confidence of society and of oneself in one's ability to play one's social role'" (Augsburger 1986:132-133). If people easily ignore the socio-cultural heritages that their ancestors handed over, they may lose face in society for acting ungratefully. So, Koreans are asked to uphold what they have received. In spite of social oppression, they cannot ignore the more useful aspect of their alien culture. Thus, they seek a way to compromise the limitation of the conservatism. This motivation of Koreans to keep both face and utility simultaneously helps both syncretism and conservatism to coexist in their consciousness.

In conclusion, we can identify the following four characteristics of Korean religiosity: a Shamanistic tendency, syncretism with other religions, otherworldliness with a pessimistic worldview, and exclusive, rigid conservatism.

1.3 The collective experience of suffering and the HAN spirit

When we try to understand the Korean religious consciousness, in addition to their religious heritages, we must also reconsider the socio-political crises and struggles that formed some of the characteristics of the Korean religious consciousness. According to JY Lee (1997:77), a common ethos that constitutes the Korean consciousness is an experience of suffering. Historically, Koreans suffered collectively and individually for many generations under the

domination of the neighbouring countries, China and Japan. In the recent past, Koreans suffered harsh Japanese colonization for 35 years (1910-1945). Although the Second World War left Korea free of Japan's dominance, immediately thereafter she had to face the calamity of the Korean War (1950-1953), which left nothing but a division between North and South. South Korea is still under constant threat by North Korea. The aftermath of the war lasted for a long time. It might be said that the 1950s was a decade of suffering - the direct influence of the war. However, even after the 1960s, the shock of the war exerted its resilient influence upon various aspects in Korea. The absolute poverty after the war led the majority of Koreans not only into suffering from starvation, but also into constant consciousness of hunger. The experience of suffering from the colonization, the Korean War, and the after-effects of a will to live in the after-war society positively became the spiritual background for the economic growth after the 1960s, and exerted its resilient influence as the underlying motivation for seeking more wealth after the 1970s. Because of these social crises, Korean religions could not but cling to the issue of material blessing for the masses. HS Kim (1999:2) rightly points out that the negative aspect of Korean Christianity, especially the Pentecostal Church, resulted not only from a syncretic religious disposition, but was also enhanced by the socio-political crisis as the after-effect of the war.

The Korean word, *Han*, encompasses the Koreans' collective experience of suffering in history, and that, in a sense, refers to the Korean collective consciousness. To translate and define the term *Han* is not easy (*cf.* Yoo 1987:221ff, H Cox 1995:238-239).

It is a feeling of unresolved resentment against injustices suffered, a sense of helplessness because of the overwhelming odds against one, a feeling of total abandonment, a feeling of acute pain in one's guts and bowels making the whole body writhe and squirm, and an obstinate urge to take revenge and to right the wrong – all these combined (Yoo 1987:221).

Harvey Cox (1995:239) compares this *Han* spirit with the word 'blues,' as expressed in African American music. In his view, the injury and dislocation that Koreans and black Americans have experienced is virtually similar, and both of their music and spirituality reflect this. The *Han* spirit is deeply rooted in Koreans' humanity and especially their religious consciousness, so that the masses become the people of the *Han* spirit, of that psychosomatic anguish and pain resulting from injustices inflicted upon them. A Korean poet, Ko Bun, says, "We Koreans were born from the womb of *Han* and brought up in the womb of '*Han*'" (cited in Yoo 1987:222).

Because of the the *Han* spirit's extensive imprint upon the Korean collective consciousness, their main religion, through its religious ritual and practices in alliance with Shamanistic syncretism, should seek to resolve this *Han* spirit repressed profoundly within the masses.

For example, the people engaged in Shamanistic rituals release their repressed *Han* through stimulating practices and rituals of a divine encounter in offering, dancing, or divination. According to Suh Kwang-Sun's research (cf. Brown 1997:124; Harvey Cox 1995:240), the Korean Pentecostal Church's worship seeks release from *Han* by the Holy Spirit, while praying and attending church. In this way, Shamanism is replaced by Christianity, but with the Christian faith and Church adapted to function in a Shamanistic way and understanding. It would not be an overstatement to say that, in a sense, one of the reasons for the Korean Pentecostal Church's religious dynamic that is easily comparable to that of other Korean churches or even other foreign Pentecostal Churches, can be found in the *Han* spirit and the Church's role to release it through religious practices. This aspect will be examined further in the next section that analyses a Pentecostal sermon in relation to its witness of the divine presence.

Thus far, we have examined the five main Korean religious heritages (Shamanism, Taoism, Buddhism, Neo-Confucianism and Christianity), the collective experience of suffering and the *Han* spirit as an additional socio-political background of the Korean collective consciousness. Based upon this religio-sociological background of Korean consciousness, we shall now turn to a homiletical analysis of the expression of the divine presence in specific Korean sermons in the next chapter.

1.4 Sermon analysis of the divine presence in preaching

When we try to analyse and understand Korean sermons in the light of how the divine presence is realized through sermons, while taking into account the religio-sociological background of Korean consciousness, there are additional prerequisites that we need to consider in our study. For an understanding of the Korean sermons, the first prerequisite is to establish a relevant homiletical analytical tool that guides our analysis of the sermons appropriately. After briefly establishing a reasonable frame for analysis, based upon which several specific sermons will be analysed, we must also select several pertinent Korean sermons that are relevant to our subject.

1.4.1 Establishing a sermon analysis frame

1.4.1.1 Basic components of preaching

The most convenient way to establish an appropriate frame for analysis, that is to underline and guide the sermon analysis, is to start by describing the essential components of preaching itself. Most homileticians agree that preaching involves the following four essential elements: God (or the Holy Spirit), the message (or the Bible), the preacher, and

the audience or congregation. On the one hand, considering the element of God in a more indirect way, both Van der Geest (1981:62) and Wardlaw (in Van Seters [ed] 1988:64) formulate their homiletical frame mainly with the outward components of preacher, text, and listener. On the other hand, to articulate the component of God (or the Holy Spirit) in a more direct and explicit way, Bohren (1971:547ff), Patte (1984:21ff), Craddock (1985:22ff), Long (1989:22),⁴ and Bailey (1991:60) insist that preaching involves four essential components: God, the Bible, the preacher, and the audience. For preaching to achieve its purpose, all four must fulfil their unique functions in relation to the other components, as shown in the figure below.

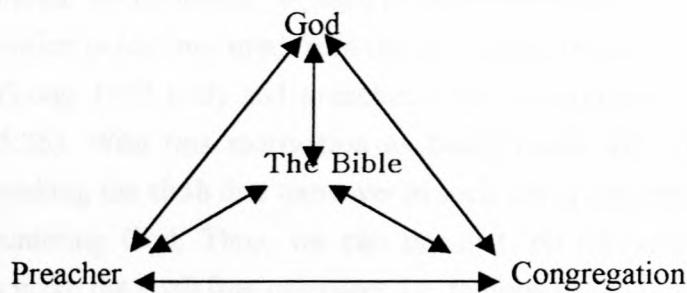


FIG. 2 FOUR ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF PREACHING

In the same vein, we can also presuppose that, for preaching to provide a sermon matrix of the encounter with the divine presence, these four essential elements (God, Bible, preacher and audience) should accomplish their own homiletical function in a preaching situation. Thus, these four elements of preaching can be reconsidered and re-interpreted specifically in terms of the divine presence in preaching. Based upon these presupposed four essential elements of preaching and their relationship with one another, we can further design a relevant sermon analytical frame and formulate relevant questions to guide our analysis of specific Korean sermons as follows:

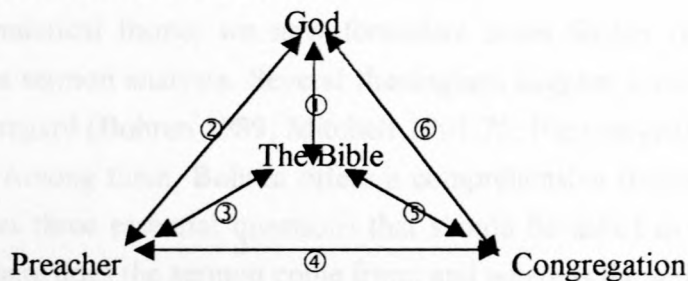


FIG. 3 FOUR ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS CONCERNING THE DIVINE PRESENCE IN PREACHING

⁴ Long (1989:22) suggests 'sermon' instead of 'the Bible'.

In the above figure, the divine presence in preaching is the result of the relationship between four elements: God (or the Holy Spirit), the preacher, Bible, and congregation. The vertical line (①) represents God's special revelation, the Bible. Based upon this revelation of God, within the synergistic relation of the three other elements (the preacher, the Bible, and the congregation), the preaching context or event is constructed at a certain moment. In this preaching context, the preacher has three lines connected to other elements, to God (②), to the Bible (③), and to the congregation (④), all of which constitute the basic sermonic matrix. As regards preaching as mediation (Van der Geest 1981:79,82-83; Buttrick 1987:251; Jabusch 1990:123; Wilson 1995:28), the second and third lines constitute the sermonic motivation for the mediation of God to the congregation, the motivation that the preacher has firstly found, encountered, or enjoyed through devotional life (②), or Bible study (③). This motivation is also nurtured from the fourth line in that the preacher belongs to the congregation (Long 1989:10ff) and preaches what the congregation already holds dear (Craddock 1985:26). With this motivation as background, the preacher enters the pulpit in the hope of making the sixth line narrower in such a way that the congregation can come closer to encountering God. Thus, we can say that, on the pulpit, the preacher's ultimate concern is to make the sixth line narrower, i.e. to draw the congregation into God's presence.

In order to accomplish this sermonic goal (⑥), i.e. the God-human encounter, preachers utilize the available four lines (②,③,④,⑤) in preaching. Based upon their trustful relationship and good acquaintance with their congregation (④), preachers preach and represent God, with whom they have a relationship (②), and as He is witnessed to in the Bible (③). So, by means of the Bible's witness, as well as the preacher's witnessing about God (④ and ⑤), the congregation may experience an encounter God (⑥).

1.4.1.2 Analytic questions

Based upon this homiletical frame, we now formulate some further relevant analytical questions to guide the sermon analysis. Several theologians suggest some pertinent frames and questions in this regard (Bohren 1989; Mitchell 1991:75; Pieterse (ed) 1995; Ballard & Pritchard 1996:175). Among them, Bohren offers a comprehensive framework for sermon analysis. He advocates three essential questions that should be asked in sermon analysis: what impresses us; where does the sermon come from; and where is the sermon heading?

1.4.1.2.1 What is the initial impression of the sermon?

The first question concerns the first impression made upon a potential hearer or reader of the sermon. At this initial stage, if possible, such a potential hearer or reader will be

considered as representative of the whole congregation. He/she can regard this first impression as the starting point for a further analysis. In hearing or reading the sermon, this person becomes a witness to the truth of the sermon (an Amen to the sermon); or if he/she cannot say Amen, but has a critical opinion, then he/she becomes a judge of the lack of truth in the sermon. Immersed in the sermon and having gathered a first impression from it, the analyser, as an attentive hearer of the sermon, should ask and seek to answer the question: How would I describe the intention/goal of the sermon?

The analysis of sermons goes further than merely having an initial feeling about the sermon, but also concerns the origin of the sermon – from whence it comes. In our analysis regarding the divine presence in preaching, this origin of the sermon can be analysed further through a detailed examination of each element that constitutes the abovementioned sermonic matrix.

1.4.1.2.2 What kind of God does the preacher witness to in the sermon (②)?

The line connecting the preacher to God (②) concerns the God-image that the preacher has in mind and witnesses about in preaching. This aspect may reveal a preacher's dogmatic view of God. According to Louw (1999:330), each pastor has a unique image of God that reflects his/her own experience of God and what He means to the preacher personally. This unique image or view of God cannot but be revealed in the sermon. Moreover, any inappropriate image of God that the preacher presupposes in his sermon, may give rise to a dysfunctional or pathological result in the congregation's faith and behaviour (Louw 1999:331). Thus, the pertinent question for our sermon analysis would be: What kind of God-image does the preacher presuppose and witness to in the sermon? The following pertinent questions in this respect will thus be asked mainly regarding the content of God's image or dogma, and the relationship between God and humans that the preacher articulates in the sermon: does the description of God include concepts like omnipotence, humiliation, grace, judgment, consolation, faithfulness, or mercy? Is He surrounded by/described with words of action or being, or in a moralistic or consolatory mode? Is He presented in the mode of grace of salvation, or of the work for salvation? Which perspective of the relationship between God and humans is dominant in the sermon?

1.4.1.2.3 How does the preacher deal with the Scriptures (③)?

Because the sermon should be based upon the Scriptures, and because a certain image or dogma of God should also be based upon, and associated with, the biblical text (③), other important questions in the analysis regarding the preacher's interpretative way of dealing with the Scriptures, are: Does he/she prepare the way for the biblical text to present a

certain image of God, or does he/she force the text to meet his/her own arbitrary view or image? Does the preacher's interpretation narrow the distance between the Scripture and the congregation (⑤) so that the Scripture can guide the congregation to God, or blur the way so that they have difficulty in finding God? If the preacher has a specific language or mode regarding scriptural language, in what way does the latter influence the former? Is there a change of scriptural language in the sermon - a change that is intended to enforce the effect of the sermonic goal?

1.4.1.2.4 How about the preacher's relationship with the congregation (④)?

The relationship of the preacher with the congregation (④) also needs to be analysed as it also plays an important sermonic role in various ways. The following aspects are of importance: the preacher's view of the congregation, the pertinent delivery mode, and what the preacher suggests to the congregation in connection with the sermonic goal. Obviously, the preacher-congregation relationship reveals and determines the preacher's unique view of the congregation, their need, or their basic motivation to attend the worship on Sunday. What, in the preacher's opinion, does the congregation need most? And: If there is a sermonic goal or image of God that the preacher wants to achieve and mediate, what would the preacher suggest as a way for the congregation itself to participate in attaining this goal or image?

The relationship between the preacher and his/her congregation also determines the specific delivery mode or rhetorical strategy that the preacher considers to be the most pertinent to what he/she wants to achieve in preaching. A comprehensive view on a preacher's rhetorical characteristics and strategies are often not apparent by examining just one sermon. However, given the fact that each sermon does portray some elements such as the preacher's unique personality, his/her view of the listener/s, his/her specific perspective of the God who is to be proclaimed in the sermon, it is not too much to say that the general rhetorical mode of the preacher can at least be illustrated from the examination of only one sermon.

1.4.1.2.5 What role does the preacher play in the witness of a divine presence?

In addition to the above three questions, we further need to examine the role of the preacher him-/herself, as the theological or personal background also has an important function in preaching. Thus a relevant question is: What is the theological or personal background that is reflected in the sermon; and how does this background function in the sermon? In connection with our interest in the divine presence in preaching, we also need to analyse the preacher's role as a witness in this regard. Does the preacher just remain a pointer who

witnesses about the divine presence, or does he manipulatively surpass this function?

1.4.1.2.6 Where is the sermon heading?

According to Bohren, there is a clear difference between the sermonic goal that the preacher in the pulpit tries to reach and the real effect of the sermon in the pew (1971:547ff). For this reason, we also need to examine the result and effect of the sermon. This effect must be analysed in the light of the following three dimensions: in the individual, the ecclesial (in the church), and, lastly, in the socio-political dimension outside the church. Firstly, we need to ask what thought process, consciousness, or actions of the individual might flow in the sermon? The second question is: How does the entire congregation react to this sermon? Or, what role does the church play in the sermon's achievement of its goal? Thirdly, what kind of stance or attitude does the sermon evoke regarding the church's being and role in the world? Or, how would society outside the church react to this sermon regarding the mission of the church in the world?

In summary, we have formulated the following six criteria for sermon analysis: the initial impression of the sermon, the image and dogma of God, a hermeneutical strategy, the relationship between the preacher and the congregation, the role of the preacher, and the actual effect of the sermon.

1.4.2 Selecting the relevant sermons

1.4.2.1 The basis of the sermon selection

In order to analyze Korean sermons, we firstly need to confirm the reason for selecting a specific preacher and sermon pertinent to our present study. We suggest the following two basic reasons why specific sermons are to be selected for our study. Firstly, the selected sermon must involve and reveal the essential elements in the witness of the divine presence which, as confirmed in 1.4.1.1, is the result of an interaction among the following four components: God, the Scripture, the preacher, and the congregation. God comes and is present among His people through the interactive pastoral matrix of the three agents: the preacher, the Scriptures, and the congregation. Thus, if possible, specific Korean sermons should be selected in which these components can be identified, in order to reveal how each element functions, regardless whether its function is positive or negative.

The second basis for selection is that the sermon should show a typical and representative aspect of Korean preaching, which we can further examine, in particular, with regard to the witness of the divine presence. In fact, there are many representative preachers in the Korean church, whose sermons show many aspects of the witness of the divine presence,

and deserve profound homiletical study. However, to deal with all these preachers would be beyond the limitations of this study. Moreover, it is not easy to find sermons that reveal a sound harmony between the abovementioned elements of preaching. Most preachers over-accentuate one or more of these aspects, with certain homiletical implications. The sermons selected for this study represent the main trends of Korean preaching, and all reflect in some way or another, this tendency to over-accentuate, and indeed need for homiletical harmony.

1.4.2.2 Selecting the preachers and their sermons pertinent to our study

In order to meet the above criteria for sermon selection, we must firstly identify the main streams of the Korean church within which we can search for representative preachers and sermons pertinent to our study.

As stated before (1.2.5), the main streams of the Korean church can be classified into the following three categories: the evangelical and conservative Presbyterian Churches, the Liberal Church, and the Pentecostal Church (*cf.* Yoo 1988:3-4). However, selecting a preacher from each group has a latent limitation since both the Liberal Church and the Pentecostal Church represent only a small portion of all Korean churches. The statistics below give a clear indication of the approximate size of each denomination.

Denomination		Theological Propensity	Members	Preacher examined	
Presbyterian	Hapdong	Conservative	2,158,908	Park,	Oak, Han Hum
	Koshin	Conservative	373,498		
	Hapshin	Conservative	136,040	Yune Sun	
	Tonghap	Moderate	2,103,295	Kwak, Sun Hee	
	Hanshin	Liberal	334,473		
Assembly of God		Conservative	1,266,569	Cho, Yong Gi	
Baptists Church		Conservative	901,007	Lee, Dong Won	
Methodist Episcopal		Moderate	1,294,330		
Holiness Church		Conservative	963,006		

FIG. 4 MEMBERSHIP OF SELECTED MAJOR PROTESTANT DENOMINATION IN 1995⁵

⁵ The exact figure and distribution ratio of the membership of the major Protestant Denomination in the Korean church can be acquired from Gwak (2000:126).

Roughly speaking, two-thirds of the total number of Christians in Korea belongs to the conservative Presbyterian Churches (Song 1999:25). In contrast, the Korean Liberal Church adopts a remarkable theological stance on Christianity's social responsibility. However, according to PH Yum (1987:144), the Liberal Church's message to underline the socio-political responsibility of the Gospel was limited to a minority of the Korean church. For this reason, the number of parishioners is so small compared to the conservative churches that we feel that they do not merit our choosing one of their preachers.

In the same vein, the Pentecostal Church also cannot be considered as a mainline Protestant Church in Korea. However, as regards our study on the witness of the divine presence, the sermons preached at the Pentecostal Church has remarkable implications, as the sermonic efforts of the Pentecostal Church has been exerting a significant influence upon other denominations in Korea.

With this in mind, we selected the following two representative preachers, Yune-Sun Park (1905-1988) and Yonggi Cho (1936-), both of whom not only represent the main trends of Korean Christianity, but were and are also typical, important and crucially influential in forming Korean Christianity. Firstly, as briefly surveyed before, the conservative Presbyterian Churches, whose membership comprise two-thirds of the total number of Christians in Korea, have been nurtured by two great masters of the Korean Reformed theology, the one being Yune-Sun Park. It would not be an exaggeration to say that, during the past 50 years, Yune-Sun Park's Bible commentaries have served Korean pulpits more widely and enjoyed a higher regard than most other books in Korea, regardless of denomination. Moreover, he was deeply involved in the establishment and development of three seminaries (Koryo Theological Seminary, Chongshin T. S., and Hapdong T. S.) and two denominations (Koshin and Hapshin). He is the only Korean theologian who presided as a dean over four Korean seminaries. In brief, he was a great mentor of conservative Reformed Presbyterian preachers, who have been ministering to two-thirds of the total number of Christians in Korea. For this reason, an analysis of his sermon can prove to be remarkably significant regarding Korean preaching, and especially also for the theme of our study.

The second preacher whom we considered for analysis, is Yonggi Cho, who, as a Pentecostal preacher, ministers to some of the biggest churches in the world. As briefly surveyed before, the Pentecostal Church cannot be considered as one of the mainline Protestant Churches in Korea. At first, I thought that Yonggi Cho and his sermons do not deserve profound homiletical study in the light of our theme, due to the following two reasons. Firstly, if we examine his more than 40 years of preaching ministry from the 1960s

until now, 2000, in terms of several components of preaching, such as sermon content, his sermon theory or sermon structure, we find elements such as materialistic blessing-centred sermon content, arbitrary interpretation, or the propositional structuring of sermons. For this reason, I thought at first that his sermons do not have enough merit to deserve serious study and be honoured as exemplary preaching in the Korean church. Secondly, some negative aspects of his sermons have already been examined and criticized by several studies (Nam 1991; HY Lee 2000).

However, the message preached by the Pentecostal Church, especially the church where Cho ministers, does have some implications for our study, due to the fact that his sermons have had a remarkable influence in Korea, regardless of denomination. According to the official report of the church, he preached to '600,000 congregates in 1990.' Stimulated by the remarkable numerical success, numerous pastors have attempted to imitate Cho's ministry and sermonic style (*cf.* Gwak 2000:37). BH Son (1983:338-339) rightly pointed out:

The majority of the Korean church, mostly Presbyterian, Methodist, and Korean Evangelical, remain rather sound, but very few remain totally unaffected by this Shamanistic mysticism. The main temptation is to emphasize the promise of earthly blessings in order to attract the Shamanistically attuned Korean populace.

According to a survey done among 2000 Korean seminarians, Yonggi Cho is "the most influential pastor of the 20th century Korean church" (JS Ka 2000:751). The exact value of his influence in various areas of the 20th century Korean church needs further evaluation. In particular, a homiletical analysis of his sermon may offer insight into a significant aspect of Korean preaching, especially as regards the function of congregational consciousness in preaching.

In addition to these two, we are yet to examine other preachers who are representative of the contemporary Korean pulpit. The "weather chart" of Korean Christianity and its pulpit is changing day by day, and we feel that these two preachers do not illustrate all the aspects of the spectrum, regardless whether desirable or not. Although both preachers are typical and important in their own fields, time brings change and contemporary Korean people prefer more modernistic preachers. For this reason, we had to select and add three preachers who could reflect the present sermonic situation in the Korean church. In 1999, a people's daily, *Kukminilbo*, surveyed 2000 Korean seminarians and, especially sensitive for the influence of preaching, asked the question: 'With the proclamation of the Word of God in mind, which pastor interests you?' This resulted in their selection of Dong Won Lee (1945-) as the first, Sun Hee Kwak (1933-) as the second, and Han Hum Oak (1938-) as the

third preacher. Since all three preachers are well known in Korea for their excellent preaching, we wish to analyse their sermons in order to fill in the picture of contemporary Korean preaching.

In selecting each sermon, our main concern was to choose such a sermon that reflects the preacher's own standard feature best. Firstly, as regards the selection of YS Park's sermon, an important norm was the necessity that his sermon should reflect his well-known personality. As said before, he is the first Korean theologian who wrote commentaries on 66 books of the Bible as his magnum opus, and his commentaries have served Korean pulpits over the last 50 years more widely and enjoyed a higher regard than most other books in Korea. With this in mind, from among 1000 sermonic digests and 130 sermon tapes that he recommends in his commentaries, a representative sermon that once was preached to pastors at a Synod meeting was selected for our study.

In the selection of YG Cho's sermon, an important norm was the necessity that his sermon should represent his unique conviction about preaching. In his homiletical book, *I preach in this way* (1996:247), he confesses that the essential contents of his sermons are the fivefold Gospels and the so-called "threefold blessing". After collecting 362 sermon scripts, which were actually preached to his congregation from 1990 until now (2001), and scrutinizing each script with data processing, I selected a representative sermon that in my opinion reflects the characteristics of his theory on preaching. He has already based a sermon on the same text (2 Cor 6:1-2) twice before (1990.04.29; 1998.09.06) in a similar way as this selected sermon.

Kwak's sermon was selected according to two criteria. Firstly, it should be representative of his theological accentuations. According to YH Lee (2000:304), one of the main subjects that he emphasizes in all his sermons is faith in the providence of God who rules over history and human life with His sovereign authority. The sermon selected reflects this aspect. Our second concern in selecting the specific sermon was to listen to his position on the divine presence of God, as articulated in the act of preaching, and to scrutinize the relationship between providence and presence.

Reverend Oak's sermon was selected from 98 sermon scripts that he had preached during the past five years. According to Kwon (1997:71), Oak pays close attention to the grammatical, historical, and theological context of a given text. The sermon selected for our study was to reflect this aspect, in conjunction with the question of our study: how does the preacher confess the presence of God. As from February 2000, Oak has preached repeatedly about the Sermon on the Mount since he felt an urgent responsibility to do so. One sermon, which he preached in relation to the passage "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see

God,” is pertinent to our study.

Lastly, one of Lee’s sermons was also selected, from 139 sermon scripts that were preached to his congregation during the past five years (from 1997 to 2001), in order to reflect his mode of expository preaching as “the most excellent storyteller, or the most excellent expository preacher, in this age” (Han 2000:12; KM Lee 2001).

1.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, firstly, in order to describe the practical reality of Korean preaching, we have constructed an appropriate analytical frame comprising the following three components: the religio-sociological background of the Korean corporate personality, five representative preachers’ sermons that are about the witness of the divine presence, and an appropriate analytical tool that will guide us to analyse five sermons in terms of the theme of our study. While discussing these three components, we firstly examined Korea’s four indigenous religions (Shamanism, Taoism, Buddhism, Neo-Confucianism), and pointed out the following four general characteristics of the Korean religious heritage: the Shamanistic tendency, syncretism with other religions, otherworldliness with a pessimistic worldview, and exclusive, rigid conservatism. In addition to these religious characteristics, we also discussed the *Han* spirit as a Korean collective consciousness that stems from the collective suffering experience.

In addition, we formulated a comprehensive homiletical analytical tool to guide us in analysing specific Korean sermons. We formulated this tool according to the following four general components of preaching: God, the preacher, the Bible, and the audience. For these four components of preaching, we referred to Bohren’s sermon analytical frame and refined the following six analytical questions to guide us in analysing the sermons:

- What is the initial impression gained by the sermon?
- What kind of God does the preacher witness to in the sermon?
- How does the preacher deal with the Scriptures?
- What is the preacher’s relationship with the audience?
- What role does the preacher play in the witnessing of the divine presence?
- Where is the sermon heading?

After formulating a frame for sermon analysis, we chose the following five Korean representative preachers and their sermons, with a view to analyse them: Yune Sun Park, Yong Gi Cho, Sun Hee Kwak, Han Hum Oak, and Dong Won Lee.

Chapter two

Analysis of Yune Sun Park's sermon

2.1 Bilgraphical Profile

Since Rev Yune Sun Park's life follows the main track of modern Korean church history, to limit his biographical profile to a few sentences would be truncating it. However, we must confine this description to certain important events pertinent to our study, and leave more detailed descriptions to other researchers.

Yune Sun Park was born in 1905 as the son of a self-established farmer in North Korea. This was when Korea, as a nation, was in a deep diplomatic swamp, on the verge of the Japanese bloody imperialistic regime that lasted for almost four decades. Although he was not born of a rich family, his parent's fervour for education and his own remarkable enthusiasm for learning enabled him to absorb and complete all his pre-college education in a few years. He converted to Christianity during his middle school days without any dramatic incident, but mainly from personal religious motives. The following anecdote describes his conversion experience:

While I was walking along a small brook one day, a doubt concerning God arose in my mind. How can I believe in a God who is invisible? Immediately a thought came from deep within me: 'The Bible you are holding in your hand is the proof of the existence of God.' To my amazement, I was convinced of the existence of God at that moment and the doubt disappeared right away. After that experience, I never doubted God again, and was always satisfied with the Christian life, holding firmly to the Bible (cited in Seu 1992:63).

His conversion experience was the beginning of his single-hearted devotion to the Bible, which he maintained throughout his ministry of writing commentaries, teaching at seminaries and preaching. After his conversion, Park entered *SoongShil* College, and majored in Humanities, which was the only subject at that time. While managing to make both ends meet by teaching English and performing various other tasks to raise his family, he was a core member of the "Dawn Prayer Squad," a student prayer group that met daily at about four o'clock, at dawn, on a nearby mountain for a few hours of fervent prayer. He was also highly active in student evangelistic outreach activities during his college years and was frequently responsible for preaching in domestic mission tours during summer vacations. Although he was still a college student without a seminary education, he carried the 'full responsibility of a pastor' at a local church. However, in spite of the wide-spread patriotic atmosphere among literates during the Japanese colonization, Park and his close

friends did not join or become involved in any other group or activities but Christian organizations during their college years, because they understood that there was a 'clear distinction between the patriotic movement and the Christian movement' (Seu 1992:86).

Immediately after graduating from college, Yune Sun entered Pyongyang Theological Seminary, the first Presbyterian school for ministers in Korea, established by American missionaries, who, by their message and methodology, cultivated an evangelical, conservative way of thinking in the Korean Presbyterian Church. In the seminary he not only attained a solid evangelical theology with a strong Puritan tendency, but also was deeply influenced by the Christian characters of the teachers in the seminary. After graduating from Pyongyang Seminary in March 1934, and following the recommendation of Hyung Ryong Park (a Calvinist and self-proclaimed fundamentalist deeply committed to the defence of orthodox Christianity and especially the infallibility of the Bible) the young Park, alone, set out for America in August 1934 to study at Westminster Theological Seminary. It was an institution strongly committed to the Presbyterian tradition and Reformed faith. Under the guidance of Dr Machen, Park devoted himself to biblical study, especially to the original languages, in order to prepare himself for writing useful commentaries for the Korean church.

After returning from America, Park began his work on the commentaries (sponsored by the Korean Presbyterian General Assembly) and taught in Pyongyang Seminary as instructor in Biblical languages. Due to Japanese persecution, he moved to Manchuria in order to continue his teaching at Bongchun Seminary. Soon after the emancipation of Korea from Japan, he moved to Pusan, the southernmost part of Korea, and taught in Koryo Seminary, which was newly established by ex-prisoners who had refused to bow their heads to Japan's national shrine and were imprisoned until Japan surrendered in 1945. Here, Park taught for seven years as the school's acting president. Throughout his life, he taught as a senior faculty member at several major theological seminaries in the evangelical Presbyterian tradition, amongst them: Presbyterian General Assembly Theological Seminary (1963-1974, 1979-1980), and finally in Hapdong Theological Seminary (1980-1988).

While continuing his teaching ministry at the seminaries, he committed more than forty years of his life (1936-1979) to writing commentaries on the whole Bible. With high veneration and supreme regard for the Scriptures as the Word of God, he extracted from Scripture the powerful and accurate meaning of what was hidden or obscure, thus acquiring profound joy and an almost ineffable excitement, as he often admitted to others. Except for time spent eating, teaching, sleeping and praying, virtually all his time was devoted to the task that gave him 'the most joy.' Consequently, the writing and publication of his

commentaries gave Park an eminence and influence in the Korean church. Today, his series of commentaries can be found in virtually every Korean pastor's study. The sheer amount of writings is staggering! The commentaries on the Scriptures amount to 11,602 pages with more than 1000 sermon briefs inserted in order to provide available material to Korean preachers. Even after the completion of the commentaries, he continued to revise them and added 8382 pages by the time of his death in 1988 (Seu 1992:344).

After the completion of his commentaries on the whole of Scripture in 1979, Park dedicated the remainder of his life to church renewal, as the Korean church, despite her phenomenal growth in recent years, seemed to have become profoundly influenced by materialism, sacerdotalism, religious authoritarianism, bureaucracy, regionalism with factional power struggles, and moral and spiritual corruption. Despite bitter accusations of 'schism without crucial doctrinal differences,' it was from this deep concern for the Korean church that he decided to join the faculty of the newly emerging school, the Hapdong Theological Seminary, whose main faculties had just resigned from the Korean Presbyterian General Assembly Seminary in 1980. Despite his advanced age and failing health, he continuously prayed, voraciously wrote many articles on church reformation, and taught seminarians with great vigour and enthusiasm until the very end of his life at the age of 83, in 1988.

2.2 Sermon analysis

In spite of his massive influence upon the Korean church throughout his lifetime of teaching and preaching, comparatively few homiletical studies have been undertaken on Park's preaching. SK Chung (1991) partly examined Park's sermons in terms of Calvinistic theology in his sermons. In his doctoral degree (PhD), YI Seu (1992) undertook a more comprehensive study of Park's Reformed theology. More recently, JK Lee (1998) analysed Park's sermons in his master's degree (MDiv) mainly in terms of 'doing theology,' with the perspective that the premise of a sermon is raised from its context, is verified in the text and again is applied in context by contextualization. However, these studies are not concerned with a comprehensive homiletical analysis of Park's preaching, particularly as proclamation of the divine presence of God.

Our initial presupposition for the analysis of Park's sermon is: firstly, that the witness of the divine presence in Park's sermon is articulated in terms of holiness before God. Secondly, that the believer's holiness before God is analogous to the image of God who is glorified by the believer, and who will in the end judge the hearer. The analysis of the sermon is correlated with extracts from another 31 published sermons of the preacher.

2.2.1 Sermon outline

On October 15, 1984, the sermon was preached to ministers attending the synod. Although the specific audience consisted of ministers of the church, this sermon reveals some general characteristics of Park's sermons. Examining the passage of Scripture (2 Cor. 6: 3-10) word by word with a running style of application, he urges the hearers to follow the Apostle Paul's example for Gospel ministry. The main argument of the sermon consists of four means of the Gospel ministry, which Park produces based upon the passage: Firstly in purity and knowledge, secondly mercy, thirdly double-edged strategy, and fourthly internalism, each of which is taken up with strong encouragement and probing questioning. As strong encouragement of the hearer to follow the right example of a true minister, he mentions a negative image of an undesirable minister, and criticizes it by issuing a strong warning.

2.2.2 What is the initial impression of the sermon?

As an ordained minister of the church of God, this sermon appeals to me to reflect deeply on my motivation and attitude to my ministry in the church: Am I carrying out the ministry in the right way with the right motivation, or do I seek a secular purpose? From the outset, the preacher emphasizes the contrast between the integrity of the servant of the ministry of God and the peddler of the Gospel. With whom do I identify before God who will judge me according to my attitude? This sermon leads the hearer to reflect on what he/she does in church ministry, and to recommit him-/herself to Gospel ministry before God.

This reflection seems to stem from his strong authority as one who is recognized to proclaim the message with a clear awareness of God. Park uses extreme descriptions, such as "Those who do the work of God are dead to themselves indeed" (P 2: L 23), or "we have to think that from now on I am going to die; this is the way to die" (P 3: L 25). Therefore, at first, we ask the question: Why does he speak with such strong words? But, after realizing that his words are spoken with sincere integrity, we cannot doubt the preacher's authenticity, and we are compelled to make a decision to become a minister desirable before God. Thus, although he does not hold forth an explicit image of God, through both his strong proclamation and spiritual authority that seem to be firmly based upon his integrity of faith, his proclamation draws the hearer into the spiritual urgency and devotional integrity of his preaching, in which the hearer cannot but be led to make a definite resolution and dedication to God.

Because of his strong emphasis on Paul's exemplary model in Gospel ministry, contrasted with the undesirable image of a peddler of the Gospel, it is not difficult to grasp the

intention of the sermon: to draw the hearer into a firm resolution to become a desirable minister as suggested in Paul's case (*cf.* P 8: L 24). In order to enhance his intention, he frequently rephrases key words, such as 'to serve' (11 times) or 'to die' (31 times). One could ask whether his strong imperative on resolution and commitment to God, could not leave some hearers feeling frustrated and discouraged?

2.2.3 What kind of God is witnessed to in the sermon?

When we try to grasp the image of God that Park witnesses to in the sermon, we first need to bear in mind the fact that, for him, the main purpose of preaching is not to describe a detailed image of God. For him, God is greater than images. However, in the background of Park's view on preaching, a certain image of God is virulent, and he inadvertently mediates this in his preaching. Moreover, through examining the key terms concerning the relationship between God and humans, we can, indeed, acquire a pertinent image of God in this specific sermon. Thus, we must first examine his view on preaching, and consequently the key terms that describe the God-human relationship.

2.2.3.1 Park's view on preaching

Park's view on preaching begins with his view of the Bible. For him, as an arduous Reformed theologian, the Bible is the very Word of God revealed for a divine purpose. He described this view as follows:

Firstly, I believe that all scripture is inspired by God. Secondly, I believe that the Bible is the written Word of God. Thirdly, I believe the organic unity of the Bible. Fourthly, I believe the infallibility of the Bible. Fifthly, I believe that the Bible is the living Word (*cf.* YH Kim 1991:96-97).

Based upon his firm conviction that the Bible is the living Word of God, Park considers preaching as a crucial chance in which God comes to His people, and speaks to them through human preachers. He insists; "God is always present with His Word. He is present always with His omniscient and omnipotent power. The Word of God is neither separated from Himself, nor Christ and the Spirit" (Park 1975:126-127). His more comprehensive view of preaching evolves around his exposition of 2 Corinthians 15-17. For him, preaching is, mainly to deliver with sincerity what the Bible says, as it has been revealed, without peddling the Word of God for profit. Then, how can the preacher deliver the Word of God with sincerity? To this question, Park suggests the following three norms that are enhanced by the teachings in 2 Corinthians 2:17: 'like men sent from God,' 'in Christ,' and 'before God'.

Primarily, for Park, the preacher should deliver the Word of God because he/she is sent by

God. In order for preachers to deliver the Word, they firstly have to listen to the Word of God through biblical study, prayer, obedience, a disciplined personality, or even suffering.

Preaching is to deliver what the Bible says. Thus the preacher has to realize the Bible rightly, and deliver it as it is. The preacher has to not only deeply study the Bible, but also pray much, and most of all; he has to live his life according to the Word. If he does not live his life as he preaches, his preaching is powerless (Park 1975:5; cf. also P 6: L 30-32).

In other words, for him, the first norm for delivering the Word of God is the authenticity of the Word, of which the preacher may be convinced through the study of the Bible, prayer, obedience, personal discipline, or suffering. He insists that, if preachers do not pray and seek the Word of God, and if they are not voluntarily obedient to the Word, this means that they have never really heard God's Word, which they intend to deliver to their congregations (Park 1986:6).

Secondly, it is essential to deliver the Word with sincerity 'in Christ.' This means that the preacher as the one who unites with Christ has to speak under the influence of the Holy Spirit. Because Park believes that the Holy Spirit has inspired all of the Scriptures, he also contends that, without the preacher's prayer to seek the Holy Spirit's illumination of the concerned text, and without a firm assurance that, in a certain sense, God speaks first to the preacher him-/herself, the preacher is never able to deliver what God says. In this respect, he follows Calvin's view of preaching. "According to Calvin, the Word of God, especially, the Word that is delivered through preaching is the means that mediates the divine grace of salvation through the Holy Spirit to us" (Park 1975:121).

The third norm is 'before God.' In accordance with (the extended line of) Reformed Calvinism, Park considers preaching as the crucial moment when God visits His people and speaks to them, and emphasizes the preacher's consciousness before God. For Park, preachers speak before God, rather than before men. Since the preacher delivers the authentic Word of God under the influence of the Holy Spirit before God, "the preachers have not to want to be recognized by men, but to seek to preach in such a way as to please and glorify God. Preaching that pleases man is, in fact, not preaching, but just a speech" (Park 1975:108). Thus, according to SK Chung (1991:403), '*Coram Deo*' and '*Soli Deo Gloria*' are the crucial terms that clearly describe what Park bears in mind when he preaches.

For Park, this view on preaching (not to please man but to deliver the authentic Word before God in order to glorify Him with the consciousness of '*Coram Deo*') is not merely a plausible declaration that may "decorate" his theology of preaching. Rather, it is an actual

conviction, and, with it in mind, he preaches as it directs. His firm conviction that preaching should, first of all, glorify God with the consciousness of '*Coram Deo*' is enhanced further by his understanding of the function of the preacher as the 'aroma of Christ,' as mentioned in 2 Corinthians 15-17.

The passage 'we are the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing' explains the double effect of Christ's aroma. For someone, this aroma works as the scent to lead into life, for others, to lead into death. This meaning needs biblical theological study. To the believers, Christ becomes the important capstone; to the unbelievers, the stone to break them to pieces (Matt 21:42-44). He is destined to cause the falling and rising of many (Lk 2:34). He is the One who causes the blind to see and those who see to become blind (Jn 9:39). Therefore, when dealing with the gospel of Christ, we have to adopt a careful attitude just like those who stand on the crucial point of life and death. Thus this ministry should be considered as an infinitely joyous work, and at the same time as the infinitely frightening one. In this ministry, indifference is strictly forbidden. Since indifference is like a spirit that is frozen over, this is a very dangerous attitude close to rejecting the love of Christ. How can the spirit that stands on the turnout point of life and death remain frozen? (Park 1986:13, my translation.).

Because Park understands preaching in relation to the presence of God who is concerned with the hearer's life and death, as later will be examined further, his actual message contains a double element of exhortation and reproach that sets forth, on the one hand, the positive exhortation that leads to a resolution for desirable direction, and, on the other hand, a negative reproach which strongly warns the hearer about taking an undesirable direction. In summary, one could say that his double emphasis on exhortation and reproach is firmly based on his strong conviction of preaching as the crucial moment through which God speaks in such a way as to bring a decisive turning point in life or death. A more detailed rhetorical analysis of this "double message" in his sermon will be done later (2.2.6).

2.2.3.2 The God-human relationship

In addition to his views on preaching, an examination of the God-human relationship in the sermon on 2 Cor 6:3-10 also sheds light on the pertinent image of God which is implied in the sermon. As mentioned in 2.2.2, one of the dominant impressions of the sermon is that of a strong recommendation for dedication to God. Throughout the sermon, Park emphasizes that the hearers of the sermon should dedicate themselves with all their hearts and souls until the last days of their lives. This call for dedication is continually enhanced by key terms, such as 'to serve,' 'to suffer,' 'to persevere,' and even 'to die.' "the mind to serve God is the real attitude God wants" (P 1: L 18). Only when we learn perseverance, can we attain mercy and compassion (P 5: L 24). Only the minister who considers suffering as his

friend is the real minister who does God's work (P 3: L19). Suffering is treasure (P 3: L 30). Those who do the work of God are dead to themselves indeed (P 2: L 24). Several emphatic words, such as servant, suffering, perseverance, endurance, and death, suffuse the whole sermon so as to show the relationship between God and the believer, and to imply a pertinent image of God.

2.2.3.3 The pertinent image of God in Park's sermon

In a broad sense, in other sermons, Park proclaims images of God as Creator, Author of providence, Redeemer, Judge, etc. These images are normally linked up with his sermon context. For example, during a Christmas service, Park speaks of the God who came to the world in order to save the world (Park 1974:5-12). During Lent he proclaims the suffering of Christ in terms of His prayer and obedience (Park 1974:211-221), or in terms of His perseverance (1974:230-239). In the following sermon, he holds forth the image of a God whose love is steadfast.

In our lives there are difficulties and adversities. We may want these things not to happen. But, lights are usually followed by shadows. In spite of our will to do our best, there are traps and difficulties. However, even there is also the love of God. His love is steadfast. There is no way it can be suspended. Even inside difficulties and adversities, the steadfast love of God hides. In other words, even there we have reason and condition to thank God (Park 1974:298, my tr.).

This God is also the almighty One who does the same work as he so often did for the Israelites in the past: "We have to know that the Lord can do the same great work even nowadays" (Park 1974:94; 1975:217). In addition to these images, when we seek a more dominant image of God in Park's homiletical armour, an image which indeed suffuses major portions of his sermons, we are confronted with the image of God who is pleased and glorified by the believer's holy life according to His Word, and who finally comes and judges all according to what they have done.

First then, the God whom Park emphasizes in major portions of his sermons is One who is pleased and glorified by the believer's holiness and sincerity (*cf.* Park 1974:34,46,118-119,292). According to SK Chung (1997: 33), "since the ideas of Rev. Yune Sun Park are firmly based upon Calvinism, no matter the title of the sermon, or which passage in the Bible he selects, he always preaches a message that emphasizes the sovereignty and glory of God." A similar image is also revealed in the sermon analysed in our study: "the mind to serve God is the real attitude God wants" (P 1: L 18); "God is pleased with the pure heart" of the believer (P 5: L 1); "He is pleased when we offer our heart" (P 5: L 2); "God is never pleased with the superficial trick. Since God wants sincerity, He is pleased with the

sincerity of those who do their best" (P 6: L 18-19); "Those who do the work of God are dead to themselves indeed" (P 2: L 24).

In addition to this image, the God who will judge all according to what they have done in the world is also evident in the main portion of Park's sermons. An examination of another 31 sermons that were published as they actually were delivered, easily reveals the image of God who will judge all according to what they have done:

Looking forward to the judgment day of the Lord coming soon, we have to think of that day. Because the Lord will save me and make me perfect on that day, we have to think according to that day, move and live life according to the norm of that day (Park 1974:68, my tr., *cf.* also 1974:14-19,71,75,80,201,206,224,255).

Concerning the image of God as the One who will judge all according to what they have done in the world, the sermon analysed in our study does not provide a direct description. However, as stated before (2.2.3.1), Park considers the function of preaching as the crucial moment through which God speaks in such a way as to bring about a decisive direction for life and death. Thus, after hearing the sermon, if the audience decides to commit themselves to God, one of the possible images that is supposed to work towards the hearer's commitment could be the image of God who judges and gives rewards according to what they have done. In addition, Park's sermon describes a God-human relationship in respect of servanthood, suffering, perseverance, endurance, and even death, all of which are about the image of God who will judge and reward according to what has been done. Thus, we can say that, generally, one of the dominant images of God which underlies the sermons of Park, is the God who is glorified by the believer's holiness and sincerity, and who will judge all according to what they have done.

However, the only question for the sermon analysis, is not: 'What image of God can we identify in the sermon?' but also 'What image of God suffuses the sermon so that it affects the hearer's consciousness in a meaningful way?' Thus, the obvious question will be: 'Can we expect the hearers of the sermon to acquire, and be meaningfully influenced by, an image of God who is pleased and glorified by their holiness, or an image of God who will soon judge them according to what they have done?' Concerning the question of what image dominates the sermon, we need to examine the general function of an image in preaching. According to Eslinger (1995:52-53), images are capable of orienting the human will within perceptions by virtue of their power to attract:

Images attract and thereby form the will through their power to shape a person's self-image, value, and longings So while language may serve therapeutic or coercive purposes, what it cannot do,

however, is 'to engage and train the will' – to shape the will by attraction; only imagery offers the possibility for such motive power.

Thus, if an image in the sermon attracts hearers, it means that that image works by speaking to them in a significant and definite way, and helps them to transform their will by its power to attract. By the power to orient the human will, images can also serve to provide new insights through a shift in perspective (Eslinger 1995:145). Through projecting a certain image capable of providing new insight, the preacher and congregation can reconstrue the time and place of preaching as a crucial change for "re-imagination of reality," according to the evangelical script of the Bible:

Such preaching does not aim at immediate outcomes but over time intends, detail by detail, to make a different world available in which different acts, attitudes, and policies are seen to be appropriate Preaching as understood here aims at images arising out of the text that may give rise to a church of new obedience (Brueggemann 1997:33).

Regarding an image's potential to make an alternative world available in which different attitudes are viewed as appropriate, Brueggemann (1997:33) says that the image gives rise to a new world of possibility. Here, we confirm the fact that, if the sermon identifies an image of God, that image should work so as to make an alternative world available to the hearers, thus giving rise to a new world of possibility for them. Given this function of an image in preaching, we sense that the image of God in Park's sermon still remains the traditional moralistic image of a God who is considered to be glorified, but also appeased, by the believer's commitment. This does not mean that Park always maintains a moralistic tone, in which the preacher emphasizes only the audience's duty and burden; rather, he reminds them often of God's steadfast love and the glorious status of the servant. Park also encourages the listeners to commit themselves voluntarily to God (*cf.* P 4: L 2-21).

However, in his sermon, we paid attention to the fact that the image of God is neither an initiative for the believer's spiritual transformation, nor does it show divine grace for a spiritual commitment. Rather, the exemplary image of the Apostle Paul (with the preacher's spiritual authority as a kind of crucial proof for what the preacher urges) is evident throughout the sermon, so that the listeners are urged to show the same perseverance and endeavour for God as Paul and the preacher himself do for His work. We can identify the image of the preacher himself as being most crucial in this sermon, based upon which the hearer must resolve to commit spiritually to God. In addition to the image of the preacher's devotional integrity, the image of the Apostle Paul also penetrates in such a way as to dominate, and perhaps even replace the image of God in the sermon. In this sense, we conclude that this sermon falls in the category of moralistic sermons, because, after

listening to the sermon, the hearer might react by either resolving to duplicate the example of Paul and the preacher, or by feeling that the goal is too high.

2.2.4 How does the preacher deal with the Scriptures?

According to Seu (1992:195), Yune Sun Park was probably the first, or one of the first, to introduce expository preaching to the Korean church, largely thanks to his study at Westminster Seminary. In this sermon, Park clearly shows his devotional ardour to preach what the Bible says. Thus, on the whole, his style can be described as a running commentary. The whole sermonic content and structure also follow the order and structure of the passages. From verse 3, the preacher expounds the meaning of ‘ministry’ and ‘the spirit of service’ in Paul’s work, and draws some instructions for contemporary hearers (P 1: L6 – P 3: L 4). After expounding and presenting the significance of the spirit of service in the Gospel ministry, the preacher again turns to verses 4 and 5, and suggests ‘eight’ forms of difficulties as inevitable suffering in Gospel ministry, which can be counted as ‘nine’ forms of suffering and be broken down into three groups of three (*cf.* P 3: L 19; Martin 1986:161).

After presenting the implication of Paul’s suffering, as mentioned in verses 4 and 5, the preacher turns to verse 6 and half of 7, and constructs the main sermonic structure with four propositions according to what is said in the remaining verses, from 6 to 10 (*cf.* P 4: L 22). Concerning his sermon’s structure, we must pay attention to how he follows the grammatical structure of the passages. In a grammatical sense, the verses from 6 to 10 are composed of three stanzas (6-7a; 7b-8a; 8b-10) according to the dominant prepositions of the passage, such as, *en* (6-7a), *dia* (7b-8a), and *ws* (8b-10) (*cf.* Martin 1986:161-164). Park constructs the main structure of the sermon with the following four themes.

Passage	Preposition	Sermon Themes	Sermon Structure
6-7a	<i>εν</i>	1. Purity and knowledge	P 4: L 22 - P 5: L 13
		2. Patience and mercy, the Spirit and unfeigned love	P 5: L 14 - P 6: L 34
7b-8a	<i>δια</i>	3. Double-edged strategy	P 6: L 35 - P 7: L 29
8b-10	<i>ως</i>	4. Internal-ism	P 7: L 30 - P 8: L 21

FIG. 5 STRUCTURE OF THE BIBLICAL PASSAGES AND SERMON

Here the dominant reason to focus on expounding what the passage says, and to construct the sermon structure as the passages run, is supposed to have been influenced by the

Reformed theological tradition that emphasizes, in preaching, what the Scripture says. While following the order of the passages, and deploying his sermon in a running commentary style, Park produces, in an orderly fashion, the above four prepositions which are emphasized as a necessary means in Gospel ministry (P 4: L 22). Thus, in terms of text interpretation, we could say that his sermon is firmly based upon text-centred interpretation, which focuses on finding what the text says.

However, here we need to examine further whether his understanding of the passages has relevance for the hearer. On 15th October 1984, just four years after founding a new seminary, Park preached this sermon to a group of ministers who were committed to first reform themselves in the last stage of life, and to serve the church in the same spirit. In this sermon it is not easy to determine the hearer's possible reaction, or the concrete application that might be suggested. As regards the preacher, this sermon clearly shows that the sermon's content and structure are firmly based upon the biblical text, and further enhanced and approved by the preacher's devotional integrity. However, as regards the hearer, we could say that this sermon lacks consideration for the hearer's reaction to the sermon, or some practical way of applying what the preacher emphasizes in the sermon. When we examine Park's view of the listener, we shall understand why he could not but deal negligently with the congregational relevance in preaching.

2.2.5 What is the preacher's relationship with the listener?

2.2.5.1 View of the listener

Park's view on preaching also produces his view of the listener in a preaching context. As examined in 2.2.3.1, Park understands preaching as a crucial moment when God comes and speaks to His people through a human preacher, in order to engender a decisive resolution of the hearer's issue of life or death. Because God speaks about life and death, listeners must do their best before the living God:

God is neither machine, nor principles. Rather, God is a living and personal being. So we have to receive the Word with our living personalities, with the dedication of our whole personality, with such a sincere attitude as sitting at Jesus' feet, a sincere attitude of listening to the Word ardently seeking the answer to the matter of life and death. This is the really appropriate attitude to receive the answer from God. This is the sound attitude deserving grace from the living God. Only then, do we realize the Word (Park 1974:35, my tr.).

Because preaching is considered to be a crucial moment in a hearer's issue of life and death, Park regards listeners as being responsible for listening to the Word with all sincerity. In

addition, in a broad sense, Park regards believers as people on their pilgrimage toward the heavenly home (cf. Park 1974:259-260). Thus, small wonder that one of Park's favourite books was John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's progress*, which envisioned this world as a city slated for destruction, and described Christian life as a great escape toward heaven (Seu 1992:273). Because believers are on their way to heaven, the preacher (having received God's authentic Word through profound Bible study, ardent prayer, obedience, personal discipline, and also suffering), as a kind of mediator between God and the believer, should offer the authentic Word as he/she received it from God (cf. P 6: L 30-32). In this vein, we could conclude that Park views the audience as people who must sincerely pay attention to what God says in preaching, so as to receive His voice in the matter of life and death. This view of the listener leads to certain rhetorical characteristics in his sermon.

2.2.5.2 Rhetorical characteristics in Park's sermon

As briefly mentioned before (2.2.3.1), one of the rhetorical characteristics of Park's sermon is the interaction between positive encouragement and negative critique. From the outset, he compares two contradictory images of a minister; one who is devoted and whom he wants the congregation to follow, and one who is selfish and whom he wants the congregation to reject. He starts his sermon with a positive image of a minister (P 1:L 3-11), but soon follows this up with a negative image of the minister (P 1: L 12). The interaction between the positive description and negative critique continues throughout the sermon, as the diagram below indicates.

Throughout his interactive argument between a positive description of a desirable minister and a negative critique of an undesirable one, Park on the one hand urges the hearers to resolve to become a desirable minister; but, on the other hand, he wards off and drives away any inclination towards an undesirable image.

Sermon structure	Former part			Main argument	Later part	
Positive description	P 1: L 3 - L 11	L 16 - L 22	P 2: L 2 - L 9	P 2: L 22- P 7: L 37	P 8: L 4 - 10	L 16 - End
Negative critique	L 12 - L 15	L 23 - P 2: L 1	L 10 - L 21	P 8: L 1 - 3	L 11 - L 15	

FIG. 6 DUPLEX VOX IN PARK'S SERMON

This interactive deployment between a positive instruction and negative reproach is not a unique phenomenon found only in this sermon; rather, it is a dominant aspect which we find in the main portion of his sermons (cf. Park 1970:49ff; 1974:5-12,24-31,32-39,118-120,141ff, 281ff, 304ff). Since Park understands preaching as a crucial moment through which listeners must resolve their matter of life and death before God, this double voice,

the positive description and negative critique, is applied in such a way as to induce the hearer to make his/her selection with spiritual imminence before God.

We also find this “duplex vox” in Calvin’s sermons. According to Wallace (1957:93), in Calvin’s sermons, we have “the two effects of the preached Word; it can either soften or harden the heart, either save or condemn the hearer”:

The Gospel is never preached in vain, but has invariably an effect, either for life or death. As the Word is efficacious for the salvation of believers, so it is abundantly efficacious for the condemning of the wicked. Calvin regards Jesus’ word to Peter, ‘whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven,’ as referring to the office of preaching (Wallace 1957:93).

With the preacher’s ‘duplex vox’ in mind, Calvin considers the preacher as one who ought to have two voices: “one for gathering the sheep; and another for warding off and driving away wolves and thieves” (Comm. on Titus 1:9). By the Word producing this violent reaction of offence in the hearts of those who are hardened, the life of the Church is partly cleansed and those who are not Christ’s sheep are, by their own choice, warded off from the fold (Wallace 1957:95). In summary: Park regards the listeners as those on a pilgrimage to their heavenly home and in need of a decision about the matter of life and death through preaching, so as to glorify God by means of their holy lives. Therefore he tries to lead listeners to make a crucial decision before God, by means of an interactive deployment between a positive instruction and a negative reproach.

2.2.6 What role does the preacher play in witnessing the divine presence?

If we want to comprehend fully how Park witnesses and proclaims the presence of God, we should further examine the role and function of the preacher himself. In this section, the preacher’s function in the act of witness mainly deals with the following two aspects: the preacher’s religio-sociological background, and the preacher’s own devotional integrity.

2.2.6.1 The preacher’s social and religious background

As confirmed in 2.2.3, the image of a God who will soon come to judge all according to what they have done, and who is glorified by the believer’s holiness, is one of the dominant images implied in Park’s sermon. In relation to this image of God, several key terms, such as servant, suffering, perseverance, and death, permeates his whole sermon. Since Park understands preaching as a way in which God speaks in order to introduce matters of life and death, the interactive deployment between a positive encouragement, negative reproach and strong warning runs throughout the sermon to encourage the listener to turn away from

secular temptations towards a commitment to the living God. One of the tones in Park's sermon is set by an otherworldly worldview, which also underlies the crucial terms which he uses to describe the God-human relationship in his sermon. Some of these terms are suffering, perseverance, serving to the last stages of life, and death, and they can only be understood in the light of this tendency towards otherworldliness. A possible reason for such an approach can be found in the preacher's religio-sociological background.

As briefly mentioned in 2.1, Park, following the teaching of the early American missionaries who insisted on upholding a conservative and fundamental faith, began to internalize his beliefs during a period of ebbing hope on the political scene - under the increasingly suppressing Japanese government. He did this in the conviction that he was separating the flesh and the spirit, and because he valued the spiritual work for the otherworldly God more highly than worldly work (*cf.* Seu 1992:86). Nurtured in the harsh atmosphere under Japanese colonization, and guided by the fundamentalistic missionaries, Park internalized his faith in God, and envisaged the time when God would bring the crucial final judgment upon the world and save His people, taking them to their heavenly home. His otherworldly view is clearly found in the commentary on the Book of Revelation, which he completed first. "Living in a difficult time, Park seemed to find consolation and hope in Revelation's vision of the imminently returning Christ" (Seu 1992:248).

In addition to the harsh social atmosphere and fundamental teaching of the early missionaries, Korean indigenous religious tradition also played a remarkable role in the formation of the otherworldliness in Park's Christian consciousness. This does not mean that, before Park was converted, he had committed himself to older Korean religions, such as Buddhism or Shamanism. Before his conversion, he did however devote himself to learning the Confucian teaching, as all other sincere Korean students did at that time. It is interesting to note that, when Park describes this world as a 'sea of suffering,' it is the very term used by Buddhism to describe this world from which we should escape (Park 1970:165). As previously examined in 1.2.3, Buddhism in Korea only desires deliverance from this world filled with suffering and sorrow. Park compares this world to a shipwrecked man, holding onto a board; "He is making an effort to reach the land. When he feels sleepy, he inflicts on his body a knife or a sharp iron object to keep himself awake. Likewise, we should look only unto the Lord, and live in Him in this suffering world" (1970:70). Of course, there are comments that have a more positive tone concerning this world, but they are sporadic, with no lengthy elaborations on the subject. As a result:

Readers are left with an impression that while Park had all those positive Calvinistic attitudes of the world locked in his head, he was not really convinced in his heart. He seemed always afraid of the

danger that the Christian would become occupied with this present world rather than the world after death (Seu 1992:542).

To summarize: in the harsh atmosphere of Japanese colonization and the pessimistic worldview of the Korean indigenous religious tradition, Park preferred the otherworldly image of God, as opposed to the Reformed theological tradition that favours a theological balance in the matter of the world's relevance.

2.2.6.2 The preacher's devotional integrity in witnessing

While considering Park's sermon, another remarkable aspect that must be discussed concerns the preacher's function and his devotional integrity. As briefly implied in the description of the initial impression of the sermon (2.2.2), one of the crucial conditions for listeners to feel a spiritual imminence and to accept what the preacher delivers in the sermon, is that the listener knows that the preacher does his best to practice what he preaches. For example, when he says, 'in prayer we have to cling eagerly to the Lord and throw all of ourselves onto Him, deep into him', the listeners are well aware of the fact that he is a man of prayer (P 6: L 26). Until his sixties, even in the midst of an extremely busy schedule, Park spent about two hours in prayer between 4 and 6 a.m. "Even until the time of his death he spent one to two hours daily in prayer" (Seu 1992:79). Another case that illustrates his consistence between preaching and practice is found in relation to the matter of 'talking about others.' In the sermon, he insists that 'when we talk about others, we have to consider whether our words will break them.' When appearing on a talk show broadcasted by the Far East Broadcasting Company, the host asked him why he had left the Chongshin Seminary to found Hapdong Seminary three years earlier, he declined to answer, explaining that he did not like to talk about others, which would be unavoidable if he were to explore the causes for his action (Seu 1992:447). This was a typical stance to demonstrate his favourite motto, 'Doing one's best in silence.'

In conclusion, we could say that the social and religious background of Park's life influenced his adherence to an otherworldly image of God, and his devotional integrity and passion for the glorification of God also played a crucial function in urging listeners to accept what he, the preacher, ardently stood for. If so, what kind of effect can we expect from his sermon?

2.2.7 Where is the sermon heading?

2.2.7.1 Individual effects

As mentioned in the initial impression, in a positive sense, this sermon urgently asks

listeners for their spiritual commitment to God's work. Through the crucial proof of devotional integrity emitted by the preacher's personality, and through his interactive deployment of a positive instruction and negative reproach, and by a spiritual imminence engendered by these sermon components, listeners may be urged to make a decision to commit themselves to God, whom they experience as the present One.

However, in a negative sense, this sermon may also raise a feeling of discouragement as, what the preacher's suggests, is too difficult for some listeners to commit to fully and to practise immediately. Although some of what the preacher says can be easily accepted, there are also other aspects that some listeners will find difficulty in practising immediately, such as: 'we have to think in this way: from now on, I am going to die; this is the way to die' (P 3: L 25), or 'without endurance to die, no one can win. Without endurance to the point of death, nothing can be done' (P 3: L 33). For this reason, we could say that this sermon lacks a more reciprocal approach to, and theological reflection on, the tension between the imperatives of the sermon and how the listeners might react to it.

2.2.7.2 Ecclesial effects

This sermon reveals Park's strong desire for church renewal. The interactive deployment between a positive encouragement and a negative reproach that suffuses the whole sermon, exemplifies both the desirable as well as the undesirable minister. He regarded one of the most important elements for church renewal to be the nurturing of desirable ministers. For him, the most expedient way of solving all the problems was by 'quality seminary education.' With this in mind, as briefly mentioned in 2.1, after having written commentaries on all the books of the Bible in 1979, Park decided to dedicate the remainder of his life to nurturing desirable ministers for church renewal.

Park forcefully expressed his yearning and concern for a better training and quality of pastors, as well as his stance against the prevailing sacerdotalism and hierarchical authoritarianism in the church in *The Presbyterian Church order commentary* (Park 1983), his first book to be published after the establishment of the new seminary. In this book, his major concern centred on exhorting and warning ministers and candidates, as similarly emphasized in the analysed sermon (Seu 1992:500). Park (1983:54) says, 'when a minister does not serve Jesus, he is not the servant of Jesus but of Satan.' When a minister realizes that he lacks the ability or gift for the work, then he should resign, or else he will spend his life in hypocrisy and will be horribly punished by God (1983:67). Park reserves the most scathing warning for power- and honour-hungry ministers, to whom he refers as 'of the devil' (1983:70; cf. P 8: L 11). Indeed looking upon 'the glorious scene that the minority will raise up its light in such a way as for the Word of the Lord to be realized at last, and for

a grain of mustard seed to grow and grow until at last it becomes a huge tree', (P 8: L 19-21) he passed away at the Hapdong Seminary in 1988.

2.2.7.3 Socio-political effects

A most urgent question asked by Korean Christians, who struggled through the military regime in Korea's modern history (1960–1980), concerns the relationship between church and state. On examining the theological scene in the conservative church during this time, we are struck by the absence of any concrete effort to address the most pressing issues. Contrary to the active published efforts of more liberal theologians, we see few serious conservative publications worth noting on the subject of the relationship between church and state, especially dealing with the matter of human rights, social justice, a Biblical or Calvinistic view of economic justice, the problem of civil rights, civil disobedience and resistance against unjust government. In the conservative camp, all the socio-political writing was focused only on the separation of church and state.

According to Seu (1992:540-541), Park, as the leading theologian and foremost spiritual leader of the evangelical or conservative church in Korea during that time, should be held responsible for not encouraging Christians to confess their faith actively, and for providing a convenient excuse for many who needed to silence their own consciences. For Park:

The state belongs to the sphere of common grace, and thus to the flesh. In contrast, the church belongs to the sphere of special grace, and thus is spiritual. These two are divided by a border of holy separation. When the spheres are confused in any way, calamity befalls them both (cited in Seu 1992:554; *cf.* also Park 1974:196-197).

With this in mind, Park did not encourage the Christians to involve themselves in socio-political matters, but chose to be silent on this matter. Although he was well aware of John Knox in the Calvinistic tradition, as mentioned in the sermon (P 5: L 11-12), Park's interest in Knox, and other Reformers, stopped at their personal piety as models of personal devotion, rather than as models for Christians responsible for socio-political involvement.

2.3 Conclusion

"Park liked preaching. In contrast to many ministers, Park never declined an invitation for preaching without unavoidable reasons" (Seu 1992:194). As examined in our study, he viewed preaching as a crucial moment in the believer's life, through which God comes and speaks to His people in order to bring a decisive direction in the listener's matter of life and death. While conscious of the divine presence in preaching, he tried to please and glorify God, rather than humans. His double voice, in which he structured his sermon with an

interactive tone between positive encouragement and negative reproach, clearly shows his view on the preacher's function as the aroma of Christ, who brings crucial direction in the matter of the believer's life and death. Concerning the image of God witnessed in his sermon, on the one hand, we examined a possible social and religious background that might have influenced him to prefer an otherworldly image of God. On the other hand, the preacher's devotional integrity also serves as a witness, serving a certain image of God, in such a way as to encourage listeners to commit themselves to God. In summary: Park's understanding of Christianity seems to be fundamental, largely concentrated on the personal rather than societal level, and the preacher's integrity plays a crucial hermeneutical role in conveying his basic beliefs.

After graduating from the seminary in May 1946, he was assigned to the Yoido Full Gospel Bible Church, where he worked as a pastor. He was a man of great faith and courage, who suffered from acute pneumonia and became a paraplegic. He was a man of great faith and courage, who suffered from acute pneumonia and became a paraplegic. He was a man of great faith and courage, who suffered from acute pneumonia and became a paraplegic.

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When Cho started to preach in the church, Korea's situation was very difficult. It was politically, was by no means easy. It was not long after the Korean War, and many were suffering from poverty and chaos in the war's aftermath. In this situation, he devoted his basic sermon content in terms of a 'threefold blessing'. This was the characteristic of all his sermons during his 40 years of ministry. He used to quote the fivefold gospel in order to enhance the theological foundation for his message of blessing. From the mid-1960's, 'the three-fold blessing was clearly emphasized as the central content of Cho's sermons' (HIS Kim 1997:4).

Because these messages fulfilled the congregational need, and occasional healings proved the authenticity of his message promising God's blessing and healing, the church could not but experience incredible growth: over 7000 in 1966 and 8000 in 1970. However,

³ Full Gospel Educational Institution 1987, *A history of the Yoido Full Gospel Church*, Seoul, Korea.

Chapter three

Analysis of Yong Gi Cho's sermon

3.1 Biographical profile⁶

Rev Yong Gi Cho, born in 1936, was a bankrupt landowner's first son of nine children. When he was 17 and a sophomore in high school, he contracted tuberculosis that nearly led to his death. One day, in Pusan, he attended a crusade led by missionary Ken Tize, from whom he learnt some charismatic Christian truths. However, lacking firm conviction, Cho struggled inwardly and began to fast and pray, during which, one night, he met Christ in a vision of light. Determined to work for God, Cho came to Seoul in 1956 to enter the Full Gospel Bible College, where he studied Pentecostal Christianity. While there, he again suffered from acute pneumonia, and became acquainted with Jashil Choi, not only his classmate, but also an important future partner in ministry and his future mother-in-law.

After graduating from the seminary in May 1958, in the living room of Choi's house with six attendants, mainly Choi's children, Cho and Choi established a "tent church," the mother-body of the Yoido Full Gospel Church. Despite its beginning in a living room, the church experienced phenomenal growth. Both Cho and Choi eagerly dedicated themselves to the ministry, and, importantly, a sizable number of the congregation's members experienced divine healing there. From the outset, the number of members of the congregation increased steadily. Three years later, Sam Todd held a great tent crusade, and Cho interpreted. After the crusade meeting, at that very place, Cho and Choi established a church with 1000 registered members.

When Cho started to preach in the church, Korea's situation, both economically and politically, was by no means rosy. It was not long after the Korean War and there were many suffering from poverty and chaos in the war's aftermath. In this situation, Cho devised his basic sermon content in terms of a threefold blessing. This has been characteristic of all his sermons during his 40 years of ministry. He later formulated a fivefold gospel in order to enhance the theological foundation for his message of a threefold blessing. From the mid-1960's, "the three-fold blessing was already systematized as the central content of Cho's sermons" (HS Kim 1999:4)

Because these messages fulfilled the congregational need, and occasional healings proved the authenticity of his message promising God's blessing and healing, the church could not but experience incredible steady growth: over 7000 in 1966 and 8000 in 1970. Because of

⁶ Full Gospel Educational Institution 1987. *A history of the Assembly of God*, Seoul: Seoul Books.

the congestion, three services were held on a Sunday, in spite of which, those who arrived late could not find seats in the church and had to sit on vinyl mats in the parking lot as they listened to the worship service over loudspeakers.

Because of the continued growth of the church, and as Cho reached his physical limitations, he needed to conceive a breakthrough to manage the huge congregation. Based upon the biblical insight of Moses who supervised 600,000 people through intermediate leaders, and considering the Korean context where men were reluctant to make home visits to other members, Cho established a woman-leader-centred cell system that played a crucial role in the growth of the church. The home visits by female cell leaders proved to be an effective method to draw new members into the church's fold. In 1967, when the cell system was introduced, it comprised 7750 individuals of 2267 families, organized into 125 cell groups.

When the membership reached 10,000, the old church no longer had adequate accommodation for all. Thus, they had to build a new church, and Yoido Island at the centre of Seoul was submitted as a possibility. Having surmounted many obstacles, the church had 12,556 members in 1973. In 1977, four years after relocating to Yoido Island, the church had grown to a membership of 50,000, and 100,000 in 1979, and continued to grow by 500,000 in 1985, and up to 700,000 in 1992 according to their official report.

Because of his focus on material blessing, many Christians criticized Cho, and the Presbyterian Church in Korea (Tonghap), one of the main Presbyterian denominations in Korea in 1983, accused him of pseudo-Christianity. In reaction to this accusation, Cho (1984, 1994) apologized for his parochial message, and promised to amend it. Accepting his apology, the general meeting in 1995 withdrew this accusation (HY Lee 2000:171-172).

In conclusion, from the above brief profile on Cho and his ministry, we can easily identify the following three important key ideas: his unique message focused on material blessings and physical healing, the woman-leader-centred cell group and its resultant rapid growth. We now turn to the analysis of his sermon.

3.2 Sermon analysis

Several Korean students of homiletics have examined Cho's sermons, and criticized his material-blessing-centred sermons. One of the characteristics of his sermons is its syncretic and Shamanic components (DN Clark 1986:51; Grayson 1995:259; Harvey Cox 1996:227; JY Lee 1997:102). IH Nam (1991) examined 48 of Cho's sermons preached during the 1970s and 1980s, and criticized similar aspects. A seminar on Cho's sermons was held by 'The Korea Academy of Church History' in 1996, where his sermons were examined by

four Korean theologians. In our study we will do a more comprehensive examination based upon a general homiletical frame, and one of his sermons will be analysed mainly in terms of his witness to the divine presence.

Our initial presupposition for an analysis of Cho's sermon, is, firstly, that the divine presence revolves around a materialistic image of God and, secondly, that the materialistic blessing flowing from the image of God is fabricated from the Shamanistic inclination of the Korean psyche, and projected in such a way as to meet their innate needs. In order to minimize the limitation of analysing only one sermon for the study, another 362 sermons, which he has preached during the past ten years, will also be referred to and examined, if necessary.

3.2.1 Sermon outline

The sermon starts with the core image of the relationship at a dinner that a mother has prepared and the responsibility of the children to eat the food. The extended line of this core image, namely the relationship of God who prepares and humans who have a responsibility, colours the whole sermon. By adding another two sentences that relate to the same image, in the introductory part of the sermon, the preacher lays the foundation for the whole sermon, the foundation being that it is the believer's responsibility to accept the blessing that God has prepared.

In answer to the question how we can receive the blessing that God has already prepared for the believer, he provides four consecutive suggestions. Each suggestion is deductively followed by a Scriptural quotation, or personal testimony. The first suggestion is that 'we have to know the fact God has already prepared the blessing for our sake' (P 9: L 12); the preacher's self-disclosing story follows this first presupposition. The second suggestion is that 'we have to get the desire and the dream' (P 10:L 27). As with the first suggestion, the quotation from a biblical text and imagery are followed by the preacher's further self-disclosing story. The third suggestion is that 'we have to pray and believe that God will answer' (P 13: L 3). Five quotations from the Bible and images that illustrate the climbing of a mountain follow the third suggestion in such a way as to support this presupposition. The fourth suggestion is that 'we have to confess blessing with our lips and thanksgiving to God' (P 14: L 2). Similarly, he supports the fourth presupposition with a consecutive quotation and explanation of the biblical texts quoted. In the concluding section, he summarizes all four statements, and ends the sermon with prayer.

3.2.2 What is the initial impression of the sermon?

As a potential and representative hearer of the sermon, I tried to grasp its message from the most objective stance possible. In a positive sense, through this sermon, I felt the need to be more positive and active in my faith and religious life, since, as the preacher underlines throughout the sermon, God has prepared a wonderful life for me, and whether I enjoy it or not depends on my enthusiasm and attitude. As he stresses often, because God has prepared wonderful blessings for me, I have to be more eager to seek and enjoy God's blessings through a more positive and active attitude towards life. Regarding the sermon's intention, we need to pay attention to what the preacher considers in general to be most important in preaching.

Whenever I stand on the pulpit, I have the goal to get rid of the suffering and anxiety of people, and instill faith, hope, and love to their minds. Because I, with this in mind, deliver the Word of threefold blessing, our church has been developing remarkably. Thus do not deliver a vague message, like flapping your arms in the empty sky! After getting the mission clear in our minds, we should deliver the message with a clear goal in mind (YG Cho 1996:224, my tr.).

This sermon accurately follows what Cho originally intended. My initial impression is that he intended to instil a positive, active attitude to life. "God has prepared a wonderful blessing for us! So now let's go take it!" The preacher seems to want to encourage the congregation.

Another tentative positive impression is his undeniable charismatic authority. He is great, not like me! He is able to focus many pastors on their unchangeable future. Universally, all seem to want to follow him; an American pastor was even healed while listening to his sermon (P 11: L 36ff). He was also able to lay the crucial foundation for the reformation of Australian Church history (P 12: L 19-21). He seems to be able to see what normal people cannot see. He seems to know how to succeed in life. Thus, to be close to him, to hear his message while attending this church seems to be very useful and helpful to me in my life.

However, I cannot repress a doubt arising deep in my mind: Is it really up to me to enjoy a blessing coming from heaven, given by God Himself? To make matters worse, if the enjoyment of the blessing of God is completely up to me, and the present situation also might depend on me, then I cannot help but doubt myself, and perhaps even God and His love for me. Does He not ask too much? Although God might have prepared every blessing for me, if to enjoy it depends on me, on my patience, I cannot but doubt God's compassion for me. Can He not help me more than that? I also cannot but feel frustrated because of my meagre faith: what a poor faith I have! What is wrong: God, the sermon, or my faith?

3.2.3 What kind of God is witnessed to in the sermon?

Initially, it seems that Cho's witness of God does not merit any criticism. In a positive sense, we might experience the God in whom Cho believes and witnesses in the sermon mainly in terms of two of His characteristics: God almighty, and God beneficent to us. Firstly, as Cho emphasizes throughout the sermon, the God, whom Cho believes in and presents, is beneficent to us since this is the God who has prepared wonderful blessings for our sake. Moreover, for Cho, this God is also almighty: "God gives life to the dead and calls things that are not as though they were" (P 14:L 3); "Didn't God create the heaven and earth through the Word? God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light" (P 14:L 6-8). Because God is not only almighty but also beneficent to us, He is worthy of our trust. He is worthy of our looking up to Him only: "To believe is to look on God only. Faith is to look on the Word of God, and to depend on God only" (P 15:L 27).

However, when we analyse this image of the almighty and beneficent God in relation to the believer's free will, we become aware that this almighty and beneficent God cannot but be limited by humans' free will, since, as he continually emphasizes throughout the sermon, no matter how many blessings God has prepared, if the believer does not desire and try to receive and enjoy them, all blessings are meaningless and useless (P 9: L 9, L 34; P 11: L31-2; P 15: L 18-9). In order to emphasize this connection between God's preparation and the believer's responsibility, Cho sometimes even uses strong words, such as death: "No matter how abundant the dinner is that the parent has prepared, if the child doesn't go and eat the food, it will starve to death" (P 15: L 26-7; cf. P 11: L 2). In brief, no matter how many blessings God has prepared and how beneficent He is, "if the believers do not want to have them, and do not work for them, God also can never work for them" (P 10: L 27-8).

In comparing what Cho emphasizes in his sermon with what the Apostle Paul says in Philippians 2:13, "It is God who is at work in you to will and to act according to his good purpose," we find that the linguistic structure of his message is exactly contrary to that of the Apostle Paul, and that Cho's view on the human role in the divine ministry falls into an "anthropological subordination," in which the human free will's role and responsibility is emphasized to become the main agent for realizing the divine blessing (R Landau 1981; J Cilliers 1996:107). However, this is exactly contrary to "theonomic reciprocity" in which Bohren, based upon Van Ruler's pneumatology, overcomes the paradoxical tension between divine determinism and human responsibility, mainly in terms of the inter-relationship between the divine initiative and human opportunity to participate (Bohren 1980:76; Firet

1986:129).

For this reason, as the following diagram indicates, the God, whom Cho proclaims, starts out by being almighty and beneficent, but, faced with the believer's free will, cannot but become an incapable God, bound by the human free will, and lastly a God who is subservient to (religious) human beings.

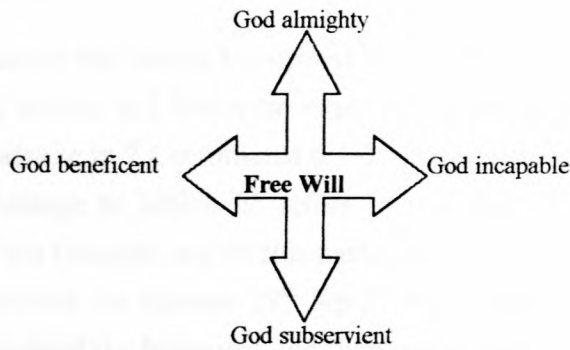


FIG. 7 THE IMAGES OF GOD IN CHO'S SERMON

Thus, no matter how mighty and beneficent the God is whom Cho witnesses about, when the listener faces the human limitation that is considered to be the ultimate boundary to be overcome, even at the end of life, then God becomes bound to the law of causality within human possibility. In a sense, He is the God who allows believers to enjoy His blessings only when they eagerly seek it; if they do not want them, God has no alternative but to become incompetent and subservient to them. Thus, Cho's witness revolves around the following four images of God: an almighty God, a beneficent God, an incapable God, and a subservient God.

In order to obtain a clearer image of the God whom Cho proclaims in his sermon, we need to examine further how he presents the relationship between God and humans. An important dimension of this relationship can be seen in his understanding of blessing. For a better understanding of this relationship, a further exposition of the meaning of "blessing", as well as his whole theology is necessary, since his concept of blessing is firmly grounded upon, and supported by, his basic theological system. This will be addressed later when we examine his theology and soteriology in relation to his concept of blessing.

3.2.4 How does the preacher deal with the Scriptures?

At a first glance, the Bible appears to provide a plausible legitimation for Cho's sermon, given that several scriptural quotations support each of the four propositions of his sermon. We could examine his attitude towards the Scriptures in two ways: firstly, how he deals

with the text upon which he bases his sermon and, secondly, how he quotes other texts in order to enhance his presuppositions in the sermon.

The way that he interprets the text, that he was supposed to preach about, reveals the first characteristic of his interpretative attitude towards the Bible. In the sermon, Cho neither explicates the textual and historical background of the text, nor expounds the biblical and theological meaning of the text, upon which he intended to base his sermon.

Cho merely takes the passage that seems to support his presupposition, and deploys what he presupposes without any textual and historical exposition of the passage. Then, what is his presupposition on this passage in 2 Corinthians 6:1-2? Because he does not provide a clear, exact meaning of the passage to which he refers in this sermon, we find it difficult to understand exactly what his thoughts are on this passage. However, he has already preached on the same text twice before: on Sunday 29th April 1990, and on 6th September 1998. In both cases, he did not expound the historical and theological meaning of the passage. In the first sermon, after presenting three propositions in turn, i.e. that we must recognize and be grateful for the grace of God the Father, of Jesus, and of the Holy Spirit, he emphasized the following in the concluding part of the sermon:

The Bible says, "now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation." Because it is said that God will answer when He offers grace, we have to seek ardently and desire that God may give us bigger grace, and because it is said that God will help in the day of grace, so we have to expect the miracle of God to happen (sermon preached on 29th April 1990, my tr.).

In this sermon, he presents the same connotation of the passage, namely that now is the day of God's favour when we must know and enjoy the blessing that God has prepared for our sake. In the sermon that he preached on 6th September 1998, he also refers to this passage and seems to imply the same. Here he emphasizes as follows:

"I will answer when I grant grace, I will help you on the day of salvation. I will work for your sake, and I will help you at any time. I will always listen to your prayer. Behold, now is the time to receive grace and the day of our salvation. Do not receive God's grace in vain. You do not receive the grace of God through your own works. You cannot buy the grace of God for the expense of human work. Through giving up the self and humanism, by totally turning towards the bosom of God, you will receive what God has prepared for us just by faith and thanksgiving. Hallelujah! To live your life in faith and thanksgiving is a result of grace." (sermon preached on 6th Sep. 1998, my tr.)

There are other sermons that present the same emphasis. Although he preaches sermons based upon other passages, when he mentions 2 Corinthians 6:1-2 in these sermons, he

always presents the same argument. When he happened to preach about 1 Kings 18:30-46, which depicts Elijah on Mount Carmel, and mentioned 2 Corinthians 6:1-2, he ended his sermon in the same tone, as follows:

In 2 Corinthians chapter 6 verse 1 and 2 it is written, "As God's fellow workers we urge you not to receive God's grace in vain" At the time when God grants grace, at the day of salvation, in order that the rain of the Holy Spirit of God, the rain of blessing may fall, just as Elijah did, we also have to repair the altar that has been torn down, and seek and receive the fire of the Holy Spirit. And then we have to dispel all the demons around us. Only when we dispel the demons and evil spirits in the name of Jesus, and ardently seek the rain of blessing, then, will God pour the rain of blessing from the dry heaven. Even though the sky has been dry for three and half years, God will pour a welcome rain from heaven. And then the earth will bear fruit. You will enjoy good health; everything will go well with you, even as your soul prospers (as preached on 21st Jan. 2001, my tr.; cf. also sermons of 16th Nov. 1997 and 25th Feb. 2001).

From these two sermons, we can grasp how Cho presupposes the meaning of 2 Corinthians 6:1-2. He emphasizes the importance of knowing and enjoying the blessing that God has prepared for his children, in line with the passage of 2 Corinthians 6:1-2, which seems to announce the inauguration of the day of blessing for God's children. In a way, Cho seems to preach what the Bible says: because now is the acceptable time for us to receive the grace of God, so we have to seek and enjoy the grace and blessing, otherwise, everything is in vain.

However, when we read the passage from a grammatical, historical, and theological viewpoint, we cannot but realize how far his presupposition differs from the true meaning of the text. Seen in the light of the textual context, verse 1 relates to the preceding verses, where Paul, as Christ's ambassador to reconcile the Corinthians with God, describes the nature of his ministry. The entreaty and exhortation, which Paul gives in 2 Corinthians 5:20, "Be reconciled to God!" characterize Paul's ministry to the Corinthians. As Christ's ambassador, Paul brought the Gospel of reconciliation to the Corinthians. Despite having learned that Jesus had died for them, they had not yet died unto themselves. And this failure was revealed partially in their refusal to stand by Paul. Instead, they stood by a false gospel and false teachers.

Thus, in 2 Corinthians 6:1, Paul again urges that they should not receive God's grace in vain. The meaning behind Paul's understanding of "receiving God's grace in vain" is to accept the apostolic *kerygma* only to abandon it, or to have a counterfeit faith based on an easy adherence to what his rivals promote at Corinth. God's grace has been given in vain, because it has not produced the desired results (Martin 1986:166). In 2 Corinthians 6:2, in

order to emphasize the importance of the Corinthians' right reaction to the proclaimed Gospel, Paul quotes and rephrases Isaiah 49:8 that proclaims the grace of God in answering prayer, adding that now is the time when this promise of God is fulfilled among them. For Paul, the coming of Christ marked the inauguration of the messianic age, a better time when God in his mercy accepted humans in grace. However, a still deeper meaning of Paul's confirmation of the inauguration of the messianic age can be attained in the light of the following textual context, where Paul further explains how he, as Christ's responsible ambassador, did his utmost in proclaiming the Gospel:

Paul's preaching does not end with the call to be reconciled to God; his preaching is also directed to the goal of guiding people on their path in Christian living, which he will later elaborate (6:14-7:1). Since the 'now' signifies the acceptable time for God's grace, the opportunity to receive his favor, the 'now' also declares an age of responsibility. One reconciled to God is also called upon not to receive God's grace in vain by despising both the message and the messenger (Martin 1986:169).

In brief, 'now' in 2 Corinthians 6:2 simultaneously marks the triumphal joy that God's ancient promise has already been fulfilled, and the dutiful exhortation that we have to respond responsibly to this inauguration of the messianic blessing. Having seen 2 Corinthians 6:1-2 from this textual and theological viewpoint, we can conclude that Cho's presupposition on this passage differs to a large extent from a comprehensive understanding of the passage, and fails to inculcate the context of the passage.

The second characteristic of his attitude to the Bible is revealed in the way he quotes so many biblical texts as proof to reach his sermonic goal. In this specific sermon, he cites 15 quotations in order to support his argument, whether the texts actually support it or not (P 9: L 11, 29; P 10: L 27, 30; P 11: L 4, 13; P 13: L 2, 19, 21, 24, 33; P 14: L 13, 14, 23; P 15: L 1). Although he applies so many biblical texts to the sermon, they tend to enhance only the preacher's presupposition, and the true meaning of each passage is not honoured exegetically. For example, the passage of Matthew 16:19 that he quotes in the sermon clearly shows this distortion.

"Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loosen on earth will be loosened in heaven." How, then, can we bind and loosen? We bind and loosen in the word. Whatever we bind with the positive, active, and creative word will be bound in heaven. Whatever we loosen in frustration, disappointment, and failure will be loosened in heaven. Our proclamation of faith is just like an echo in the mountain (P 14: L 14-19).

Matthew 16:19, quoted by Cho in his sermon, neither expresses the importance of a positive confession in faith, nor supports Cho's argument. What Jesus mainly says in this

passage concerns the might of the gathered church on earth, and her belief in what has already been fulfilled, in heaven. Another example of Cho's distortion of passages quoted to strengthen his presupposition can easily be found, for example, when he quotes Psalm 50:23:

We also have to give thanks to God. It is written in Psalm 50 verse 23, "He who sacrifices thank offering honors me, and he prepares the way so that I may show him the salvation of God." Giving thanks to God is the sweet-smelling offering at the end of all prayers. God is pleased with this good scent (P 19: L 23-25).

What Cho means here by 'thanks to God' is mainly 'to confess a positive saying with the lips,' even in difficult situations, as he suggests in his fourth supposition for enjoyment of the blessing that God has prepared (P 13: L 37). For him, "Thanksgiving always makes the mind positive, and without thanksgiving our mind can't become positive" (P 15: L 4-5). However, when we reread the passage quoted in his sermon, we find that Cho fails to follow what the passage mainly means. Psalm 50 speaks about the importance of a right attitude in worship before the God who judges the righteous and the wicked according to their hearts. Here, in Psalm 50, God wants Israel to acknowledge her dependence on Him, by giving offerings for His mercies, and by obeying His commandments. Especially verse 23 that Cho quotes in his sermon, confirms this meaning: "He who sacrifices thank offering honors me, and he prepares the way so that I may show him the salvation of God." Thus, it is not exegetically responsible to draw the importance of a positive and creative saying from this verse.

Using Scriptural passages as proof to support the preacher's own presupposition has negative ecclesial consequences. As Buttrick (1987:19c, 266c), Eslinger (1995:20a,26c), and Campbell (1997:80a,84c,228a,243b) point out, the congregation must be trained within the interpretive community to read Scriptures rightly. Preaching is a crucial opportunity for the congregation to learn how to read the Scriptures, and how to base their lives upon what the Bible says, i.e. the total Scriptural infrastructure. "Through preaching, the people learn to participate in the interpretive process" (Rose 1997:92). Thus, if preachers distort the right way to read the Scriptures, the aftermath is serious: Scripture may no longer fulfill its normative function in the formation and nurturing of Christian communities. Even if biblical terms and images are used, a distorted implementation of Scripture in parochial sermons undermine the acquiring of a sound hermeneutical sensitivity.

3.2.5 What is the preacher's relationship with the congregation?

3.2.5.1 View on the congregation

Basically speaking, Cho regards the congregation as people who struggle with poverty and disease, and, thus, prefer to hear a message that gives hope, encouragement, and a concrete way towards a healthy and successful life. His preaching followed this direction from the beginning of his ministry in 1958, since he then preached to poor people struggling with disease.

At that time, all of my sermons were about the ethics of Christianity, or morals, or heaven and hell. I also mentioned the blessing and grace only in a spiritual sense. But the believers or all those evangelized were unconcerned with these things. Because they were so poor, sick, and worn out by the hardships of life, they were not concerned with ethics or morals, or even heaven and hell. They considered these sayings as a kind of ornament or luxury suitable for those who led a full and easy life. The most urgent and necessary thing for them was a dish of warm food, or a packet of medicine. These things were the gospel for them (Cho 1996:398, my tr.).

In this difficult situation, Cho came to the conclusion that he should preach the message that God blesses His people and solves their problems in life, because this is the only message to which the people would listen with interest; the only contact point between the sermon and the audience (Cho 1996:400). He says that his sermons were focused totally upon a message to help the congregation solve the problems that arise in real life (1996:402).

The preacher has to preach the message that is necessary to the congregation. There are so many people who get tired, and suffer from the hardship of the life among the believers. Even those who live under good conditions in life also surely have anguish in some aspect of life. If the preacher preaches something far from their experience, he will fail to engage the interest of the congregation, since the people expect the story that they want to hear, and they prefer to listen to good sayings (Cho 1996:366, my tr.).

Therefore, we can conclude that Cho regards the congregation as being tired of the hardships of life, such as poverty, failure, illness, and anguish; thus, those who need to be instilled with a positive hope for the future. Unfortunately, Cho misses the deeper theological challenge that the poor and suffering pose, and concentrates one-sidedly on messages that centre on material blessing and success.

3.2.5.2 Rhetorical characteristics

Generally speaking, in order to enhance the effect of his sermon, Cho uses two rhetorical devices. The first is the deployment of the sermon by means of four propositions, as he is of opinion that the congregation will easily comprehend the whole sermon content (*cf.* Cho 1996:277). In the deployment of each proposition, Cho first produces a promise that no one can ignore, then develops this promise with proof from Scripture or his personal experience. The second remarkable device in his sermon is his use of sensuous images, such as the dinner table (P 9/L 5-6), and climbing up to the summit (P 13/L 5ff).

Another remarkable aspect of his sermon is his imperative tone of speech. In the sermon he utters the imperatives, "You have to" or "you should," 38 times in 316 sentences. The proportion of imperative sentences to the whole sermon is remarkable in that the main part of the sermon consists of an illustration and argument where an imperative utterance is not really necessary. An additional aspect that reveals his perspective on the causal responsibility of humans to enjoy the divine blessing is also the way in which he utters many conditional sentences (19 times): "If we do in this way, then, God will do in this way" (P 9: L 7, 8, 32; P 10: L 15, 26; P 11: L 25, 28; P 12: L 10, 36; P 13: L 17, 25, P 14: L 11, 30, 31, 33, 35; P 15: L 7, 15, 26). Thus, we can conclude that the rhetorical way for Cho to secure an experience of the divine presence in his sermon gives rise to the impression, as already stated, that every fulfilment of a divine blessing is totally dependent upon the believer's willingness, and that the almighty and beneficent God is One who is incapable, or even subservient to humankind.

3.2.6 What role does the preacher play?

3.2.6.1 Personal experience of suffering and socio-political surroundings

As discussed in 3.1, Cho suffered from tuberculosis that brought him to death's door during his adolescence. At that time, Cho had a spiritual experience. During his studies at the Seminary, he again suffered an attack of acute pneumonia, and had to be discharged from the army due to a rupture and a major operation. Then, all of these illnesses with which he struggled were regarded as fatal. According to HY Lee (2000:161), "his long life and struggle against disease not only enhanced his attachment to life, but also motivated him to emphasize the healing message when he preached later."

In addition to his personal experience of acute disease, the period and surroundings in which he started his ministry also motivated him to prefer a message that emphasizes material blessing and physical health. As briefly mentioned in 3.1, when he started his

ministry towards the close of the 1950s, Korea's situation, both economically and politically, was extremely dark. Under these circumstances, Cho had to find a message that could meet the congregational needs. The social order of the 1950s after the Korean War influenced Korean people to accept the strong power of the nation-state. Most people thus accepted General Park Chung Hee's military coup in May 1960. President Park promoted the power of his military regime by means of an anti-Communist ideology, on the one hand, and a growth-centred economic policy, on the other. These two policies met the people's expectation of security and material welfare. Cho's message within the church echoed the materialistic ideology outside the church in such a way as to confirm that it was legitimate for the congregation to seek material blessing and physical health in God's name.

After the 1960s the government's Economic Development plans accelerated the process of industrialization and urbanization and a rapid shift from a primary-industry-centred society into a tertiary-industry-centered society took place in the 1980s (Han 1998:15). Job changing was common. Rapid industrialization, urbanization and massive immigration from rural areas resulted in social and psychological insecurity among the people. Continuous political disturbance, as well as hostile confrontation with North Korea, aggravated people's anxiety about their uncertain future (CJ Ro 1998:19-20). In this situation, Cho's message not only focused upon hope for the future and encouragement for a better life, but also suggested a practical way for the congregation to seek material blessing and physical health, and in a sense brought "hope" to his listeners.

3.2.6.2 Cho's theological foundation for blessing

For a better understanding of how Cho misinterprets the meaning of the passage with his presupposition in this sermon, and how he, moreover, distorts the theological relationship between God and humankind in his ministry in general, we must further examine what kind of blessing Cho presupposes, since all other issues depend on his understanding of this "blessing." First, however, we must examine the so-called fivefold gospel, and especially the threefold blessing, which Cho also mentions in this sermon (P 10: L 24; P 14: L 22). As Cho himself admits, all of his sermons over 40 years were firmly based upon the fivefold gospel and threefold blessing (Cho 1996:247,402). "The kernel of Cho's sermons is the fivefold gospel and the threefold blessing" (MS Park 2000:31; cf. SA Im 2000:90; HY Lee 2000:164,169).

The fivefold gospel consists of five main doctrines that the Full Gospel Church of Yong Gi Cho regards as the most important components of theology in Pentecostalism: the gospel of regeneration, of the fullness of the Holy Spirit, of divine healing, of blessing, and of the Advent. According to the official report of his church, since the fivefold gospel represents

the theory and doctrine to live their lives in faith, there is a constant need for the practice and application of the fivefold gospel. According to Cho, the application of the fivefold gospel results in a threefold blessing of humans, the latter being created in threefold: spirit, soul and body. Thus the threefold blessing is an applied term that encompasses the comprehensive blessing of mankind, blessing of spirit, soul, and body (ITI 1993:35).

However, the term, 'fivefold gospel,' seems to have been formulated after the presentation of the threefold blessing in the 1960s in order to cover up the theological flaw of the threefold blessing and to emphasize that the message of material blessing and physical health was based upon more comprehensive doctrines (MS Park 2000:54). In fact, for Cho, Regeneration and Advent have no real theological significance. The emphasis in Cho's ministry rather falls on the fullness of the Holy Spirit, divine healing, and blessing (MS Park 2000:33). For these reasons, Cho is better known for the threefold blessing rather than for the fivefold gospel (MS Park 2000:47). Therefore, in this study, it is enough to focus mainly on the threefold blessing, as proclaimed by him.

Cho draws the theoretical basis of the threefold blessing from his unique soteriology that was developed from his threefold understanding of a human being, i.e. as consisting of spirit, soul, and body (MS Park 2000:47,49). His perspective on blessing starts with the idea that the Creation and fall of humans involve a materialistic dimension. According to him, when God created the world, He first created the material world, then created humans. Cho considers the creation of the material world as proof that God recognizes the importance of material for humans (MS Park 2000:48). Cho also believes that 'the fall of man' has three dimensions, i.e. death of the spirit, curse on the land, and physical illness and death.

Due to the fall of man, the spirit was separated from God. And the land was cursed and thorns and thistles began growing in the land. These thorns in homes, society, and the world make humans shiver and shake with suffering. Moreover, because of Adam's rebellious sin against God, all of us became destined to die and death and illness that drives all men to death approaches us ceaselessly (MS Park 2000:48).

Based upon this threefold fall of man, Cho further insists that Jesus' ministry of salvation should be applied to a threefold human salvation, i.e. salvation of the spirit, the soul, and the body. As MS Park points out, "Cho says that the salvational work of Jesus intends to reverse the threefold fall of man caused by sin; it is of course that Jesus came to save the soul of man. In addition, he gave food to those starving (material blessing), and healed the sick" (MS Park 2000:48). For Cho, the cross of Jesus was not only a ransom for the burden of human sin, but thereby He also paid for the environmental curse and illness. And,

following this trend, he understands the Holy Spirit mainly in terms of what the Spirit actually does for humankind now (SA Im 2000:100). He regards the Spirit as the One who actually brings to us what Jesus acquired through his work of salvation for humans. Thus, we can clearly see that all three in the Triune God are involved in the believer's wellbeing.

Because of his this-worldly perspective of blessing, and its negative aftermath within the Korean church, many theologians started, as we already stated earlier, to criticize his message, and the Presbyterian Church in Korea (Tonghap), a main Presbyterian denomination in Korea in 1983, accused Cho of pseudo-Christianity. After taking his explanation into consideration, this accusation was withdrawn in 1995. In reaction to these criticisms, Cho defends himself as follows:

Nowadays, many scholars say that the faith that seeks the blessing of God is not Christianity, but the Shamanistic faith. But how can the Shamanistic blessing and the Christian one be identical? Shamanism seeks the blessing from the death gods and idols; Christians seek the blessing from the Lord of hosts, the Creator. Moreover, Shamanism seeks the blessing regardless of the relationship between demons and men; we seek the blessing firmly based upon the certain promise of God, then, how is this identical to the Christian blessing? Everywhere in the Bible it is written that God is the origin of blessing, and the human who is made in the likeness and image of God is bound to seek blessing. Seeking a blessing cannot be accused of being Shamanistic; because humans were originally created to seek blessing, they die while crying 'blessing!' even at the moment of dying. After making Adam and Eve, God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and increase in number," and when calling Abraham out, He gave His blessing and said, "You shall be the origin of blessing," and also when calling Israel out, He said "Go to the land of Canaan flowing with milk and honey. The fundamental motivation for humans to seek blessing, was given by God. Thus to seek and receive blessing from God cannot be compared to what Shamanists do. Thus I eagerly tell the way to seek the blessing to my congregation. When telling and preaching the way to be blessed, the believers come and receive the blessing. Among my congregation, there are more than 2000 who became prominent businessmen after being penniless. When they first came, they came in frustration due to their pennilessness, but through listening to positive sermons, their consciousness begin to change. (YG Cho 1996:156, my tr.)

Cho thinks that the crucial difference between the Shamanistic blessing and the Scriptural blessing is evident in the presupposition that God promised a blessing to Christians. However, what kind of blessing Christians seek is not a matter that concerns him; for him, the issue rather is from whom Christians should seek blessing, regardless of the type of blessing:

Repenting our sins before God the Father who created heaven and earth, and asking for blessing in the name of Jesus as the Word promises, is fundamentally different to Shamanism that, while not believing in the Creator who created heaven and earth, just supplicate to receive blessing (YG Cho 1996:402, my tr.).

At this point, we have no need to dwell in detail on the theological meaning of blessing to counteract Cho's idea of blessing. It will suffice merely to refer to the fact that a sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to sinful nature (Gal 5:16). Although his perspective of material blessing and physical health seems to have biblical legitimation, it is decidedly one-sided. This one-sidedness will become clearer in our examination of his message in terms of the socio-political effect outside the church (3.2.7.3).

3.2.6.3 Charismatic authority

In order to understand how Cho proclaims the divine presence in his sermon, we must also examine the kind of role he himself plays as preacher. If it is indeed so that the God-image or divine presence witnessed to in Cho's sermon is based upon a distorted presupposition, then, how can we understand the actual phenomenon of so many people listening to, and accepting, his message? A possible answer might be found in the charismatic authority in his ministry. It is generally accepted that he is the pastor of the world's biggest church. According to his church's official report, the attendance reached 700 000 in 1992. Even if this is an inflated number, and in reality closer to 200 000 or 300 000, it still is great numbers. One could argue that his successful ministry is an indication that his (partial) understanding and practice of the Gospel apparently presents no problem. Although we might criticize his message as being distorted and parochial, as he is well aware, his message that focuses on blessing has apparently brought about "the remarkable development of the church" (YG Cho 1996:224). He says:

The reason that our church developed remarkably to this extent is not only that the message of Jesus Christ's gospel was strongly emphasized, but also because I ceaselessly prayed for the sick. When we first established the church in the *Deachodong* districts, the concentration on the divine healing in our ministry paved the way for the remarkable development of the church (YG Cho 1996:226, my tr.).

As mentioned in 3.2.6.2, more than 2000 prominent businessmen line up around him, all of whom are considered as living witnesses of the legitimacy of Cho's message (*cf.* YG Cho 1996:156). In other words, his ministry and message that concentrate on material blessing or physical healing have brought this remarkable success, and also enhance the validity of his message and ministry, and vice versa. Based upon this living witness, he dares to

emphasize the importance of his prayer in healing, and his crucial role in the reformation of the Australian church (P 12: L 5, 22).

3.2.7 Where is the sermon heading?

3.2.7.1 Individual effects

After listening to this sermon, the congregation might do what Cho suggests in the sermon: firstly, admit the fact that God has prepared a blessing; secondly, desire to acquire that blessing; thirdly, pray and believe that God will answer; and, finally, orally confess this expectation. And, while hearing this message, they might feel relief that their hardship seems to be removed. But, as we know, mental gimmicks, such as positive thinking or mind mapping, cannot truly remove the burdens of real life. God's presence is too mysterious and immense to be made into a recipe, as in Cho's sermon. As JY Lee (1997:74) rightly points out, when relief becomes an end in itself, preaching isolates the congregation from the real world and encourages them to seek false emotional security in the psychic parochial image of God.

This is as destructive as the drugs to which people become addicted. Good preaching that involves the proper presence of God must encourage people to engage the real issues which they have to confront in their lives, and to nurture them as truly loving and caring persons, enabling them to transform the world (JY Lee 1997:74).

In Cho's sermon, the possibility for the congregation to be led into negative escapism is evident in his suggestion not to look at the surroundings and circumstances (P 13: L 21, 23, 24, 27). In fact, he emphasizes, "to look at circumstances and surroundings has nothing to do with faith that is to stand on the Word of God only." (P 13: L 21, 23, 24, 27). But, just as faith means standing on the Word of God, it is also standing in the centre of worldly circumstances, not with the secular intention of material blessing and physical health, but with the Word of God itself transforming the secular situation into a godly one.

3.2.7.2 Ecclesial effects

In this sermon, Cho often mentions the church. However, his comments on the church revolve around blessing; in other words, he sees the function of church practice in relation to seeking and praying for blessing:

If we, with this burning desire to receive the grace, attend all Sunday worship, Wednesday worship, cell group meetings, pray at the dawn prayer meetings, cry out at the overnight prayer meetings, and

with even more earnest desire, fast and pray at the prayer mountain persistently, then, the Lord surely will answer our prayers (P 11: L 25-8).

The main context in which he emphasizes the importance of the church in his sermon is when the church is regarded as the sphere in which Christians must seek and pray for blessing. In addition, when Cho emphasizes seeking and receiving blessing and success in life, he relates it to the fullness of the Holy Spirit via the church's practice. Cho emphasizes that, for a successful life, it is most important to receive the Holy Spirit, and that the fullness of the Spirit can be maintained only within the church's continual life and practice (HY Lee 2000:180). In other words, he insists that for a successful life, the believer should depend on the power of the Holy Spirit, and that a successful life is impossible without the church. Thus, this pneumatology is totally church-centric. And, "through emphasizing that they will never be successful in life if they neglect church attendance, Cho continually holds the believer within the church only" (HY Lee 2000:180). Therefore, it is not saying too much that, with this partial perspective on the church, it is not easy for the congregation, as the gathered people of the Kingdom of God, to learn communal consciousness, and to formulate and express the communal responsibility of their faith.

3.2.7.3 Socio-political effects

According to Nam (1991:26, my tr.), Cho has never preached a prophetic message:

When we discussed the purpose of preaching, we confirmed that sermons, according to their purpose, might be divided into the following four groups: kerygmatic preaching, didactic preaching, healing preaching, and prophetic preaching. According to this classification, 4% of Cho's sermons are kerygmatic preaching, 38% didactic and dogmatic preaching, and 58% healing preaching, and 0% prophetic preaching.

The same conclusion can be drawn from the following interview by a reporter of the main Korean monthly magazine last year:

Q: Reverend, you have been faithfully taking the priestly role to concentrate on healing and encouraging the poor populace. However, don't you think you are weak in the prophetic role and commenting on the social injustice?

A: I am not talented in the prophetic role. Aren't the other men doing these things? I think my mission is to console and heal the poor and sick people just as mother Teresa does (Shindonga Oct, 2000:10, my tr.).

As he admits here, the main focus in his ministry and preaching is on healing and encouraging the populace, rather than arousing a socio-communal consciousness on issues

of socio-political injustice. This issue of the socio-political responsibility of preaching is raised here not with the purpose of compromising the message of Christianity, but because I believe it is of the utmost importance, because the light of the Gospel shines upon every inch of the world. According to Brueggemann (1997:98), Christian preaching that addresses a baptized community should not be confined to the church:

There is no doubt that the preacher first addresses the baptized community. It is, however, in my judgment, thoroughly unbiblical to settle for that first addressee. This news has a 'second addressee' who finally awaits the same news as does the 'first addressee.' The nations are invited to receive and celebrate this offer of sanity, to celebrate the way Naaman did his healing and the way Nebuchadnezzar did his rehabilitation to power.

Christian preaching must reflect the unique light of the Gospel before the eyes of the world. Although the world does not attend worship services to hear the preached Word of God, Christian preaching should confess the presence of God who is working at the centre of the world.

3.3 Conclusion

In all fairness, it should be stated that Cho is well aware of the fact that God comes and reveals Himself through preaching, i.e. preaching is an opportunity to mediate His presence (YG Cho 1996:87,91,164,207).

Where the preacher preaches, that is the place where God is present. This preaching is not the word of the preacher; it is the Word of God, who enters the body and mouth of men, and speaks through them. Thus preaching stands not upon a human place, but upon a divine place... Since Jesus is the Word, when the preacher delivers the Word, God is present as the Word. Thus the preacher should faithfully deliver the Word. If the preacher proclaims philosophy, literature, morals, or theology, then Jesus will disappear there (YG Cho 1996:87, *cf.* also 164, my tr.).

Concerning the homiletical theory on the divine presence in preaching, Cho seems to have no problem. However, when we examine his sermon, asking what kind of God is proclaimed, then, he cannot escape serious criticism. In order to understand why Cho preaches as he does, we examined his personal, socio-political, and theological background. We also pointed out how Cho's perspective depends on blessing, against the criticism that his message on blessing is Shamanistic. As argued in 3.2.3, the image of God that Cho presents in his sermon is partial, and fails to take other images of God into account, such as a God who wants to lead his people beyond material blessings. In his sermon, the mighty and beneficent image of God may promote superficial optimism and opportunism in an

expectation that God will remove all burdens of life. In addition, blind commitment may follow this superficial optimism, since he urges the congregation to have more faith and to try harder even ‘to the last point’ (P 13: L 7, 14; cf. Louw 1999:342). But, the problem is: what if this superficial optimism is seriously challenged, for instance in the case when God’s mysterious presence becomes His “absence”, and He “fails” to offer an answer, resulting in failure or illness? In such a situation the only effect will be disappointment and doubt about God. “When crises affect their health or rob people of their material guarantees, people with a ‘Father Christmas’ view of God are deeply disappointed and this could eventually lead to doubt” (Louw 1999:342). In conclusion, we could say that the image of God that is presented in Cho’s sermon is partial and distorted, mainly adapted to worldly preferences and thus fails to offer a more comprehensive outlook on the mysterious aspect of the divine presence in human life.

Kim Ki-uk, having graduated from a middle school in Seoul, came to South Korea alone. After passing the qualifying examination for graduation at Seoul, and graduating from Danbury University with a B.A. in English literature, he entered the Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Seoul in 1961. After that, he studied theology further (Th.M.) at Princeton Theological Seminary and received a doctoral (D.Miss.) at Fuller Theological Seminary. After ministering in the Jackson Park Church for 10 years, he came to the present Gonsung Church in the Hunsandong district of Seoul in 1977. Here he has been ministering for more than 30 years. At the present, 34,900 members are registered in the church and about 1,000 people attend service on Sundays. In addition to this church ministry work, he has been active in a mission school, Presbyterian Theological Seminary, as well as Yonsei University, and has been involved in the relief of South Korea and the evangelism of the city, and thus has a noticeable influence on the Korean church.

4.3 Sermon analysis

As mentioned in 1.4.2.2, research done among 2000 Korean sermonists in 1999, revealed that Song-Hye Ki-uk was evaluated as one of the best preachers in Korea. The Far East Broadcasting Company has been recording Ki-uk’s sermons and selling the sermon tapes. As a result of a survey of the orders according to customers’ requests, he was again ranked as belonging to the group of best preachers (KM Lee 2000:10). A seminar on the study of Ki-uk’s sermons was held by ‘The Korea Academy of Church History’ in 1999, where his sermons were analysed and evaluated by three Korean theologians. In this seminar, Ki-uk

Chapter four

Analysis of Sun Hee Kwak's sermon

4.1 Biographical profile

According to KM Lee, a free contributor to the *Choson* monthly magazine (Jan. 2000), the following three phrases could summarize all we know about Rev Kwak: his firm refusal to grant an interview, good preaching, and silent relief work in North Korea. Since Kwak was not willing to accede to an interview, there are few people who know details of his personal profile.

Sun Hee Kwak was born in 1933 in Hwanghae Province, North Korea. When, on the 4th January 1951, the South Korean army retreated from North Korea during the Korean War, Kwak, having graduated from a middle school in North Korea, left his mother there and came to South Korea alone. After passing the qualifying examination for high school graduation at Seoul, and graduating from Dankook University, where he majored in English literature, he entered the Presbyterian Theological Seminary in order to become a minister. After that, he studied theology further (ThM) at Princeton Theological Seminary, and received a doctoral (DMiss) at Fuller Theological Seminary.

After ministering in the Incheon First Church for 16 years as senior pastor, he established the present Somang Church in the Shinsadong district, a wealthy area of Seoul, in October 1977. Here he has been ministering for more than 20 years, with 16 junior pastors. At present, 34,000 members are registered in the church, and about 20,000 members attend the service on Sundays. In addition to this church ministry work, he not only lectures at his old school, Presbyterian Theological Seminary, as well as Yonsei University, but is also deeply involved in the relief of North Korea and the evangelism of the army, and thus, exerts a noticeable influence on the Korean church.

4.2 Sermon analysis

As mentioned in 1.4.2.2, research done among 2000 Korean seminarians in 1999, revealed that Sun Hee Kwak was evaluated as one of the best preachers in Korea. The Far East Broadcasting Company has been recording Kwak's sermons and selling the sermon tapes. As a result of a survey of the orders according to customers' interests, he was again ranked as belonging to the group of best preachers (KM Lee 2000:10). A seminar on the study of Kwak's sermons was held by 'The Korea Academy of Church History' in 1998, where his sermons were analysed and evaluated by three Korean theologians. In this seminar, KB Min,

a prominent Korean church historian, stated, “his sermons stands at the center of the most orthodox range of Korean preaching” (2000:298). At the same seminar, HK Kim also stated, “such a preacher with such deep theological perspective is rare in Korean church history” (2000:337). In 1998, MS Shin, for his master’s degree, analysed and evaluated Kwak’s sermons in terms of the relationship between spirituality and ethics. In 2000, a free contributor to *Choson* monthly magazine also reported on Kwak and his sermons. Obviously, Kwak is a respected preacher in Korea. We now look at one of his sermons.

4.2.1 Sermon outline

Kwak starts his sermon with a philosophical proposition that a person’s true character is revealed most clearly in an extreme situation, such as in the face of death or suffering (P 16: L 7-17). After confirming this proposition, he turns directly to an image of the suffering Christ and draws the analogy, i.e. Christ revealed His true character at the crucial time when He appeared before Pilate’s unfair court. The contrasting images of Jesus and Pilate, standing face to face, dominate the whole sermon. Here, on the one hand, Jesus, as the accused, stands before Pilate but, actually, He is the real Judge of all. On the other hand, Pilate, seemingly the judge, faces Jesus, but, in fact, he is being judged by the strange Accused before him. In this paradoxical encounter between a powerless God and a seemingly powerful man, Jesus, seeking divine dispensation, keeps his serenity in the face of death, without any change of attitude. From the paradoxical image of Jesus and Pilate, Kwak urges his listeners to make the resolution to follow the same route that the suffering Christ took, with a divine dispensation in mind (P 19: L 37). Lastly, in order to inspire the listeners in their resolve to follow the suffering Christ, he expresses the conviction that God will be present at their very moment of suffering. Here Kwak implements crucial storytelling, and describes a God who was mysteriously present at that very place where many Japanese were persecuted to death (P 20: L2-30). He ends the sermon with the call to follow the same path of suffering that Christ took, with the reminder that God is present in suffering (P 20: L 31-37).

4.2.2 What is the initial impression of the sermon?

After reading this sermon, as a potential and representative listener to the sermon, I felt motivated to undertake all difficult tasks in my life, if they were destined for me. The preacher reminded us that a person’s true character is revealed more clearly in difficult situations (P 16: L 8-17), and convinced the listener of this truth with the image of the suffering Christ. Kwak is very good at presenting the image of a suffering Christ who, in the extreme situation before death, chooses the way of suffering in such a way as to reveal His true character for the fulfilment of salvation. After presenting the contrasting images of

Jesus and Pilate, the preacher urges the listeners to follow the way that Jesus has shown, and asks: “Where can we find the face of the Christian?” (P 19: L 37). All Christians, at any moment, may have to make a resolution to take over an unpleasant duty and responsibility. This sermon is so encouraging that listeners may also be urged to take up a task that they are reluctant to do, without any excuse and in silence, so as to prove their true faith in Christ, who suffered (*cf.* P 18: L 30-31). In the sermon, he seems to instil into his listeners an attitude of faith to accept the way of suffering with an image of the suffering Christ in their minds: “Dearly beloved! Let’s stop talking. Let’s quietly choose the way of suffering with the Lord. It is because this is life” (P 20: L 36).

As a homiletical student, I feel that this is a sophisticated sermon that is not only based upon a strong theological foundation, but is also well developed with an image-centred presentation of the presence of God, also in an urban congregation. On the one hand, Kwak develops his sermon on a firm theological basis that describes God’s hidden Word. Moreover, this sermon proclaims the Gospel that God is with us in human suffering. On the other hand, the preacher formulates his sermon with a prominent imaginary setting of both the powerless Jesus and the seemingly powerful Pilate, in order to effectively urge the listeners to resolve to choose which one to follow.

4.2.3 What kind of God is witnessed to in the sermon?

In Kwak’s proclamation of God in this sermon, he implements the following two images: Christ who innocently suffers in silence before Pilate, and the God who is present in human suffering. Firstly, the preacher preaches Christ who, in spite of his innocence, followed the way of suffering in silence. Through this ironical image of God, the preacher, on the one hand, indirectly reminds the listeners of Jesus’ mighty power and authority to perform many miracles and healings, and to teach the Word of God (P 18: L 5-7). However, on the other hand, through convincing questions, such as, ‘Wouldn’t you think that those who put a crown of thorns on Jesus should get pricked by those thorns and collapse before Him?’ Kwak exposes and tries to remedy the listener’s distorted anticipation that those who believe in God can manipulate the divine Almighty in a worldly way, for example by means of worldly power and militant force (P 18: L 8-10). Kwak gives the reason why Jesus was not willing to manifest His divine omnipotence: because God had destined such suffering for Him in order to fulfil the ministry of salvation. God had determined His way of suffering, and Jesus had already resolved to submit to this suffering (P 18: L 23).

The sermon’s other dominant image is the God who is mysteriously present in human suffering. In the extended line of the former image of the suffering Christ, he introduces this later image of the divine presence in human suffering in order to instil in those listeners,

who might resolve to take up the way of suffering, the conviction that God will be with them in suffering..

In order to understand Kwak's preaching more comprehensively, we must further examine what kind of perspective he has in mind about the relationship between God and humans. The crucial term that not only implies this relationship, but actually also appears throughout the sermon, is 'divine dispensation.' This will be examined in 4.2.6, when we speak about the role of the preacher's theological viewpoint.

4.2.4 How does the preacher deal with the Scriptures?

The interpretative aspect in Kwak's sermon must be examined and evaluated in the light of the following three concerns: the core of the contents of Kwak's whole sermon, his interpretative motivation, and the interpretative direction in which the preacher reconstructs the initial message that he acquired through studying the passages. The last concern encompasses both interpretative as well as rhetorical aspects. In this section, the interpretative aspect will be analysed in such a way as to reveal the preacher's way of dealing with the Scriptures. The rhetorical aspect of the message, in the light of the preacher's relationship with the listener, will be dealt with in next section (4.2.5.2).

Firstly, as the sermon examined in our study also implies, one of the core aspects of the contents of Kwak's sermons is Jesus Christ's cross and resurrection. While endorsing the Early Church's orthodox faith, Kwak specifically emphasizes the kerygmatic faith in the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ as the core of the Christian faith:

Indeed, for Kwak it is the life, cross and resurrection of Jesus that is the most fundamental and important doctrine that Christianity teaches. The knowledge, belief in and dependence on the life, cross and resurrection of Jesus should therefore also form the basic departure point for Christian preaching. According to Kwak, preachers should take care to pay attention to Jesus' lifetime ministry; but we must also understand His lifetime in the light of the cross, and the cross in the light of the resurrection. This he calls the Early Church faith, or the kerygmatic faith in theological terms (Kwak 1992:95, my tr.).

For Kwak, "the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ are the kernel of the faith, and the other many miracles and ministry of Jesus during His lifetime are just satellites that support and should be understood in the light of the kernel" (Kwak 1992:126). An analysis of the passages of Scripture that Kwak prefers to preach about reveals his emphasis on the cross and resurrection as the core message of his sermons. According to MS Shin (1998:21) who analysed the frequency of references to the Gospels in Kwak's sermons preached from 1982

to 1996, of the 184 sermons, 135 (63%) were based on the New Testament, and 68 (more than half of these New Testament sermons) centred on the Gospels that emphasize Jesus Christ's cross and resurrection. Based upon these observations, we could say that Kwak prefers to preach on Scriptural passages that regard Jesus Christ's cross and resurrection in such a way as to witness to the kerygmatic faith of Christianity. With this interest in mind, Kwak may have chosen the passage of John 19:1-9, which indeed refers to the cross of Jesus as a kerygmatic message.

Our second concern is his interpretative way of approaching and interpreting the passage. We assume that the preacher might have found a possible clue to approach this passage from 1 Timothy 6:13. According to this passage, on the one hand, Jesus made a good confession before Pilate (P 16: L 29). On the other hand, the verses of John 19:1-9, which Kwak expounds in his sermon, clearly show that Jesus does not say a single word before Pilate. Caught between these two contrasting descriptions, Kwak seems to have found a way to reconstruct creatively the conventional image of the silent Jesus before Pilate. In other words, the preacher endeavours to show clearly that Jesus says many things in his silence before Pilate. Thus, he emphasizes, "Jesus, standing before Pilate, does not utter a single word. But underlying this scene is the marvelous Word, which we have to listen to again and again" (P 17: L 8-9). In the light of 1 Timothy 6:13, the preacher infers that Jesus, in spite of his silence, says many things. The preacher creatively interprets the text, pointing to the Word that speaks in silence.

Because Kwak tried to formulate the basic contents of the sermon mainly within the framework of Jesus' obedience in silence, he seems to have confined the selection of passages to verse 9, so that the sermon could concentrate on the image of obedience in silence. If the sermon's selection went beyond verse 9 in such a way as to involve the dialogue between Jesus and Pilate (John 19:10ff), it would be difficult to concentrate on the image of Jesus suffering in silence.

Then, how did the preacher formulate the message he acquired through his study? As we noted, Kwak first constructs the dominant image of the suffering Christ who obediently keeps on his destined way toward the redemptive sacrifice in silence. After that, the preacher urges the listeners to follow the same way that Jesus took (P 18: L 30-P 19: L 3; P 19: L 37). From this connection between the exemplary image of the suffering Christ and the preacher's encouragement to follow the same way, it is clear that he implements the image of the suffering Christ as an exemplary model that listeners too should follow.

In this phase, we need to examine Kwak's sermon in terms of the sermonic applicability of the Christological image, i.e. whether Christ can indeed be presented as an exemplary

model to listeners. This does not mean that Kwak always implements an exemplary model that the listener should imitate and follow in their lives. In the following sermon that is based upon Jesus' saying in John 16:33, "I have overcome the world," Kwak, as sophisticated theologian, follows another route. Here he stresses the gracefull initiative of God, also in our obedience:

Everything depends upon the dispensation of God. This event (of the cross) belongs to the dispensation of God, to the history that God rules. Jesus knows it. Thus, this event of the cross was arranged by God's power and wisdom. At the moment of knowing it, we win. This is the revelation of God's love. Here the tremendous love of God is revealed. At this moment, the Lord says, "I have overcome the world." Moreover, Jesus' saying rather means that we are also to win. Since I have won, you will also win. His victory makes our victory. It is the victory that guarantees our victory. "Take heart! I have overcome the world. Therefore, you will also overcome." Here is the promise of God (sermon preached on 5th April 1998, my tr.).

As clearly implied here, he does not always adhere to an exemplary description in which the preacher tries to present an image of Jesus as an exemplary model for the congregation. Notwithstanding, one of the dominant aspects (critically identifiable in all his sermons) is the existential application of the Christ-centred image. Several analysts also identify this aspect, whether in a positive or a negative sense. While examining Kwak's sermon in terms of incarnational methods, KB Min (2000:283, my tr.) evaluates the existential application in his sermons as follows:

We can identify a unique sermon prototype in Kwak's sermons. After choosing the passages, he thoroughly penetrates the message in the passage with remarkable insight. Then, while adhering to the centre of the passage, he seems also to deviate from it. Perhaps he feels that if he continually concentrates on the passage, his message will not have relevance to real life.

KB Min reckons that one of the merits in Kwak's sermons is the existential connection between the biblical passage and the congregational situation. This connection is done through a demonstrative illustration or imaginary presentation. Min (2000:283) names this existential connection an incarnational method. However, in a more negative sense, MS Shin (1998:74, my tr.) also points out that Kwak approaches the Scriptures in rather existential terms:

In this sermonic style, the preacher deals negligently with the redemptive historical understanding of the Bible. His sermon creates an impression that the context is forcefully drawn into the text. If the Bible is the Word of God, and the Word exists in order that God can save human beings, then, we need to regard the Scripture from a God-centred point of view. Even though Kwak's sermon does not

belong to the category of symbolic preaching or exemplary preaching, because of his existential understanding of the Scriptures, his sermon seems to lack strong proclamation, in the sense that it does not deliver the Word itself with the trends of the divine redemptive history in mind.

In a general sense, given the fact that the preacher should always bear the congregational context in mind, it will be unfair to demand that the preacher should ignore the issue of existential application, and only maintain the redemptive historical interpretation. Perhaps it is indeed a false alternative. In this sermon, Kwak clearly presents the image of the suffering Christ in such a way as to evoke a certain willingness in listeners to follow Him. Seen within a biblical and theological framework, Jesus Christ can be witnessed as a perfect model for Christians to follow (*cf.* Hebrews 12:2).

Nevertheless, Jesus Christ is also more than a perfect model whom Christians should imitate and follow in their lives; He is the Author of our faith, whose unique attributes should be proclaimed in such a way as to draw listeners into a saving relationship with Him. This is exactly what recent postliberal homiletics are concerned about regarding contemporary preaching. According to CL Campbell (1997:57,192,193,196), Jesus Christ should be proclaimed in such a way as “to render the unsubstitutable identity to the listener, rather than to be reduced to rational propositions or absorbed into general human experience.” Jesus Christ is more than a perfect model for Christians; He is the Author of faith, who gives the believer spiritual strength and salvation through His unique and unsubstitutable divine identity. The question could be asked: does Kwak, in this sermon, present the congregation only with an exemplary, Christological model?

No, for in a later part of the sermon (P 20: L 2), another image of God is held forth, which supplements the exemplary function of Christology. In the later image, God is witnessed as a living God who visits us personally, and is present with us amidst human suffering. This image is more than an exemplary image held up before the believer; God is preached in such a way as to reflect His close solidarity with human suffering. Because of this image of God associated with human suffering, listeners are effectively drawn into the presence of God, so as to resolve willingly “to choose the way of suffering” (P 20: L 36-7).

4.2.5 How is the preacher’s relationship with the listener?

4.2.5.1 View of the congregation

The social location of the Somang church, where Kwak has been ministering for the past 20 years, offers a relevant starting point for examining his view of the congregation. Somang church is located in one of the wealthy urban districts of Seoul. Moreover, the congregation

consists of many socio-politically eminent people. KM Lee (Jan. 2000, my tr.) reports about the social aspects of the congregation as follows:

Mrs. Kim (51), who is a deaconess and cell group leader of the church, tells me what she discussed with her friend: "One of my friends, who attends another church, asked me whether I know what the three conditions are to be considered belonging to the group of the Korean elite. I asked what they are. She answered that they are to live at Hyundai Apartment, to live in Apkujung district, and to attend the Somang church. After listening to her, I laughed for a while; in fact, attendance does reach a high level. She added that in her cell group, almost all of those members who are over 60 have graduated from university, and many women in the congregation can also play instruments."

With this in mind, KM Lee (Jan. 2000) regards one of the characteristics of Somang Church's congregation to be elitist. MS Shin also has the same assessment. According to Shin (1997:72), the congregation consists of many eminent politicians, professors, lawyers, and businessmen. Located in wealthy urban districts in Seoul, Somang Church attracts many socio-politically eminent people. In the study of motivation for church growth, some socio-psychological theories try to explain the causal factors of church participation and commitment. One, *inter alia*, is a 'status group theory' that explains the congregation's motivation to participate in the church because of the social status, honour, and recognition that it confers on them (*cf.* WG Lee 1999:241). However, we must accept that Kwak's sermons are also instrumental in motivating the congregation to participate, and that they do so not only for social status and honour that the Church confers.

Kwak's view of the congregation (comprising mainly of the socially successful and wealthy) is closely linked to the urbanization and industrialization that took place in Korea during the past 40 years. After the 1960s, in the Korean society, transformation from an agricultural to an industrial economy, specialization, and the development of the service industry promoted population mobility from rural to urban areas. In 1960, 28% of the population lived in urban areas, but this increased to 41% in 1970, 57% in 1980, and 74.4% in 1990. As pointed out by WG Lee (1999:250-251), rapid urbanization caused the collapse of collective consciousness and loss of identity.

In cities, people with different cultural and regional backgrounds live in a dry and harsh urban environment. Furthermore, they move around without settling permanently for various reasons ranging from changes in the living environment and improvements in standards of living, to children's education and job transfers. The lack of a collective identity creates value-oriented and utilitarian social and interpersonal relations that have their basis in material gain, causing individual "loneliness in the crowd."

Although living at the centre of Seoul's wealthy areas, the congregation of the Somang Church cannot be free from the aftermath of urbanization and industrialization, which has divested urban dwellers of a sense of belonging and solidarity, and caused competitive consciousness as a functional state in the bureaucratized, institutionalized society, and resulted in anxiety, loneliness, or identity crises. While examining this urban environment, Kwak borrows the term, 'urbane nomads,' from Jacques Attali. He uses this term to describe the congregation:

A book, *21st century dictionary*, was recently published, and read by many people. This book was written by Jacques Attali, who, discussing the 21st century, anticipates that many changes will take place in all areas. He says that the important characteristic of 21st-century people is the emergence of urbane nomads. The term 'urbane nomads' has great significance. It doesn't mean 'to wander' as in the past; they are nomads dwelling in the city. Their mind and thinking is nomadic. Although they dwell together, they feel lonely. There is neither settlement, nor stability. Thus, as you know, the so-called apartment tribe moves house every two years for no reason (sermon preached on 14th Nov. 1999, my tr.).

As this sermon clearly shows, Kwak thinks of his congregations as "urbane nomads" who, in spite of social success, cannot be free of the negative aftermath of worldly success and wealth. Those who live in Seoul's wealthy areas, on the one hand, have acquired a high social status and enjoy the best life in Korean society. On the other hand, while living in desolate concrete apartments, they suffer from a sense of loneliness and alienation caused by urbanization and industrialization, or the frustration and anxiety of a competitive institutionalized society. In the sermon that we are analyzing, the introductory part also reveals his double perspective on the congregation. On the one hand, they may acquire glory, praise, richness, honour, and undeserved success for a while (P 16: L 12). But, on the other hand, they can never be free from an extreme situation where they suffer incomprehensible suffering (P 16: L 16-7). In spite of their high social status, they still need an answer for life's existential struggle. In short, we can deduce that Kwak sees the congregation as those who, in spite of social success and wealth, are not satisfied with life and need spiritual guidance based upon the Word of God.

In a sense, in this sermon, Pilate may be considered as representative of the Somang Church's congregation. Like Pilate, they seem to have acquired high social status and enjoy the best welfare in Korean society. But, as mentioned before, they are not free of the negative aftermath of success, such as a sense of loneliness, frustration, anxiety, or emptiness – the result of severe competition in an urbanized and institutionalized society. Moreover, in an extreme situation, they also have to face God's absolute destiny, and they

cannot but shake with fear, like Pilate, before Jesus. Then, our next question is: How does Kwak deliver what he has in mind for his congregation? In brief, the rhetorical characteristics of Kwak's sermon indirectly imply his view of the congregation.

4.2.5.2 Rhetorical characteristics in Kwak's sermon

A sermon should be delivered in such a way as to suit the congregational characteristics, which determines the sermon's rhetorical variables. In Kwak's sermon, we find similar aspects of the specific rhetorical variables in respect of the congregational characteristics.

First of all, Kwak delivers the sermon with references to extensive and up-to-date information. Just like Pilate who knows much about Jesus through accurate reports; the listeners to Kwak's sermon are also highly intellectual Christians who already know much about Jesus through many excellent sermons and lectures. Thus, a normal sermon that is delivered with a normal effect would not necessarily satisfy their appetite. In order to support the message of his sermon, Kwak reads extensive, up-to-date literature. For example, in the sermon preached on 14th November 1999, borrowing the concept of urbane nomads, he refers to a *21st century dictionary*, a translated version of which was published on 11th October 1999, just a month before. KB Min (2000:286, my tr.) evaluates Kwak's extensive reading for the sermon as follows:

In other words, the preacher has to see through all variables and constants of the historical situation, and has to co-exist there existentially. Here reading and exploration of the times is essential. Kwak seems to tower above others in this respect. In fact, he has knowledge of almost everything: from cars, to pipe organs, acoustics and music, sports, health, gastronomy, investment tech, philosophy of rest, management, even about the laser, etc. So many ministers from many churches flock to him from inside and outside the nation, in order to listen to his extensive wisdom and experience of thorough administration of the ministry, ministerial matters, or the matter of a relationship with the congregation.

In brief, he is a preacher who studies and does his best to meet the congregational intellectual expectations. He is well known as a preacher who is well read (KM Lee Jan. 2000). In this sermon also, Kwak penetrates to the core of the book, *Silence*, written by Endo Shusaku (1999), and creatively reformulates his sermon's message in relation to the core of the book's content.

Another remarkable rhetorical characteristic of Kwak's sermons is the narrative and imaginary development. One of the salient rhetorical structures in the typical Korean sermon is a three-point development with an authoritative proclamation. However, Kwak is

well aware that his congregation cannot be moved by an old-fashioned mode of delivery. The members are urbanized and egalitarian, acquainted with a more non-authoritative style of delivery through indirect persuasion, such as an imaginary or storytelling delivery, rather than an authoritative proclamation based upon the preacher's presupposition. A suitable delivery mode for this congregation would be a non-authoritative and imaginary deployment (*cf.* McClure 1995:41-42).

As examined in 4.2.3, two images of God dominate this sermon: Jesus Christ who innocently suffers in silence before Pilate, and God who is present in suffering. In this sermon, Kwak first presents the contrasting images of Jesus and Pilate; One representing those who boldly choose to suffer in silence, and the other representing those who quake in fear despite their powerful status. Although the preacher does not directly refer to Pilate as clearly representative of a contemporary congregation, the following description may easily induce the congregation to identify with Pilate:

Today, there is no way that Pilate can recognize Jesus. How can he recognize Jesus; he, Pilate, who is drunk with this world alone, intoxicated with power, totally absorbed in himself? No matter how he looks, there is no way that he can recognize Jesus. Pilate, in spite of knowing, does nothing for so many reasons and is just shaking with fear and mental conflict (P 17: L 12; P 19: L 12).

"On the one hand, Jesus has spiritual power; on the other hand, Pilate also seems to command in a loud voice with worldly power" (P 19: L 36) - just like themselves who seem likely to acquire a high social status in the Korean society. However, the preacher is quick to reveal the hidden reality beneath the outward appearance, and confirms that Pilate has already been humiliated. As soon as the congregation seems likely to agree with this confirmation, the preacher demands that the listeners make a firm decision: "Where can we find the face of the Christian?" (P 19: L 37). After compelling the listeners to follow the suffering Christ, Kwak does not leave them to follow Jesus by themselves. He rather presents the other crucial image of God, i.e. the God who is present with those who suffer, as Jesus did. Kwak knows very well that, at this point, the listener may accept the suffering way if it seems that they are destined to do so. Thus, Kwak turns to the image of God who is present in suffering and tries to instil into the listeners, who might choose to follow the suffering Christ in their lives, the conviction that God will be present in their every moment of suffering.

Therefore, we can conclude that the rhetorical characteristics of Kwak's sermon, that are dominated by an imaginary and storytelling presentation, are relevant to the congregation who prefers the intellectual, imaginary, and egalitarian delivery mode. Since the congregation consists of highly educated, urbanized and egalitarian people who are

acquainted with a more imaginary comprehension by means of a narrative description, rather than an authoritative proclamation, Kwak deploys the sermon indirectly in such a way as to urge the listener to receive what he has in mind in the sermon.

4.2.6 What role does the preacher play ?

4.2.6.1 The preacher's role

As mentioned before in 4.2.5.2, the congregation that Kwak has been ministering to consists of highly educated, urbanized and egalitarian people who not only require a more sophisticated and creative message, but also expect a more non-authoritative delivery mode. As regards the role of the preacher pertinent to this congregational propensity, the first characteristic that we can identify in the sermon is the method the preacher uses to reveal the message hidden beneath the reality. As Kwak emphasizes, "truth often hides itself, so that recognitions are blurred" (P 16: L 8, 10). However, through the cross, all the teaching, power, and authority of God acquire new meaning, and are re-interpreted (P 16: L 27). Underlying this statement, we can detect his presupposition that the preacher's role is to bring new light to bear on conventional passages, in which the congregation may find new meaning conducive to an understanding of the blurred times and reality. In the sermon preached on Luke 19:41-44, he implies this role of the preacher as follows:

Where do all accidents, disasters, mistakes, and foolishness come from? Why do we become ignorant of what brings peace to us? It is because this is hidden. The Lord says, "My peace I give you." Jesus maintains peace even on the cross. The Lord teaches us the way of peace. He gives us His peace. Only the peace that the Lord gives us is true peace. "If only you had known on this day what would bring peace to you." Looking at the phenomenon hidden to the eye even today, the Lord feels pain in His heart. Just as the Lord sheds tears, we also have to look again for the way of peace with burning tears (sermon preached on 6 Sep. 1998, my tr.).

To attain a new understanding of the blurred reality – perhaps this is a fitting description of Kwak's homiletical endeavours. This is also why his sermons are recognized as "such an excellent cultural lecture that the non-Christian can also listen without any refusal" (KM Lee Jan. 2000). By presenting a creative perspective, the preacher can help the congregation to interpret, and have a new understanding of the uncertain times and life.

The imaginary mode of persuasion raises another characteristic that indicates the preacher's method in the sermon, namely that of an indirect approach. Kwak constructs the sermon with several effective images and storytelling in such an indirect way that he convinces his listeners to receive what he has in mind. With no direct reference to the textual relevance to

the congregational situation, nor any authoritative proclamation, but mainly with an imaginary and storytelling deployment, the preacher effectively confronts the listeners with some remarkable images of God, and in doing so, urges them indirectly to choose the right way. In short, the preacher implements a non-authoritative and dialogical mode of preaching.

However, this approach could also be interpreted as being somewhat tentative. What we feel is lacking, regarding the preacher's role in his sermon, concerns a certain embodiment of the preacher's personality. For, through a preacher's personality, the Word of God is sacramentally concretized in such a way as to be conducive in experiencing the divine presence. Thus, in a biblical, theological sense, the preacher embodies the Word of God in his/her witness, just as the prophet once did (*cf.* Jer 1:9, 15:16; Ez 3:1-3). This is what almost all homileticsians emphasize (Van der Geest 1981:82-83; Fretheim 1984:152-153; Craddock 1985:22; Buttrick 1987:251; Jabusch 1990:123; Wilson 1995:28; Resner 1999). Through actual mediation, the congregation may accept what the preacher himself/herself clearly displays in the pulpit.

In conclusion, on the one hand, the creative, imaginary, and storytelling delivery is effective in persuading the highly educated, urban, egalitarian congregation into accepting what the preacher has in mind in the sermon. On the other hand, his tentative role in the sermon causes something to be lacking as regards the need for a more concrete, intimate confirmation presented by the preacher's presence in the pulpit.

4.2.6.2 The preacher's theology about the divine dispensation

For a better understanding of the preacher's role, a further examination of his theological perspective on the divine dispensation is necessary. It not only underlies the God-human relationship in this sermon, but also permeates the main portions of all his sermons. According to YH Lee (2000:304), a theme that is often emphasized in Kwak's sermons is the divine dispensation. For Kwak, all events on earth take place according to divine dispensation. In the sermon preached on Jesus' healing of a nobleman's son (John 4:46-54), Kwak describes the divine dispensation relative to the son's sickness:

This passage tells us about God's dispensation for this man. With a special plan for this nobleman, God works here in order to save king Herod's official. From this passage we realize what a wonderful procedure God followed for this man's sake: God gave him faith, made it grow, disciplined him, and made his faith wonderful. From this passage, we realize that every event is under the control of God Himself (sermon preached on 26th July 1998, my tr.).

In the same vein, Kwak refers to the divine dispensation even for the man who was born blind:

Looking at this event, Jesus first considers God's ministry and His salvational history. He considers God's will and God's dispensation. Looking past the visible phenomenon, he looks at the ministry of God, and what such a totally useless blind man alone can accomplish. Jesus considers God's personal and individual dispensation for him (cited in YH Lee 2000:305, my tr.).

Because everything happens by divine dispensation, Christians should try to find the profound will and plan of God beneath superficial phenomena and events. Kwak presupposes the same in the sermon analysed in our study. Beneath Jesus' silent suffering before Pilate there is this divine dispensation and Jesus' willing obedience to God's will (P 18: L 23-24). As clearly implied in the sermon, Jesus acts upon divine dispensation in the unjust court before Pilate. Because Jesus has already committed his life to God and His plan, and everything has already been completed in the relationship between God and Himself, it does not matter what happens (P 19: L 15-17). For Kwak, this is the exemplary image that believers should follow in their lives (P 19: L 17). Because God has already determined everything that humans must undertake in the world, believers must have faith in the divine dispensation and lead an obedient life.

Based upon the divine dispensation, Kwak develops his perspective of how to understand human suffering. Underlying suffering too, divine dispensation is there for our sake. For Kwak, divine dispensation indeed provides a way for Christians to overcome human suffering. In the sermon preached about Jonah who fled from God's command and fell into the great wind and waves (Jonah 1:11-17), Kwak again interprets suffering in relation to divine dispensation:

Jonah disobeyed God' command, and fled to Tarshish. But God had control over him and, ultimately, Jonah could not refrain from ministering for God. He has a special wish for the individual and for the nation. God has his ideal, his wish, and his dispensation. In order to accomplish it, He works strongly, even today. He works among the great wind and waves. He speaks in the winds and waves. He acts there. Before doing this holy work we have to obey sincerely. Only then, these winds and waves will abate. (sermon preached on 30 Aug. 1998, my tr.).

In the sermon preached about the discipline of God, who carried the Israelite people on eagles' wings (Ex 19:1-6), Kwak emphasizes this aspect as follows:

Brothers and sisters, sometimes we are given a very difficult or even harsh work during which we cannot help crying out, "I am going to die." But you never forget that this is part of God's wisdom.

Inside this suffering there is God's power. Inside it there are God's curriculum, His dispensation, and His discipline. Through this suffering, God teaches and trains us (sermon preached on 11th Jan. 1998, my tr.).

Because all suffering in Christian's lives on earth happens under God's dispensation for their sake, in suffering we must find and obey His will. This perspective is also evident in the sermon examined in our study. As the preacher emphasizes, Jesus remained serene in the face of death, because He had already accepted his destiny to die for the fulfilment of the ministry of salvation (P 18: L 23-29). Indeed: If we understand suffering in terms of a divine dispensation, we acquire the ability to overcome suffering. In the sermon preached about Jesus' disciples who struggled with the storm on the Sea of Galilee (Mk 4:35-41), Kwak refers to John Wesley's saying and once again emphasizes the divine dispensation that underlies suffering:

There is a famous saying of John Wesley: until God has accomplished His dispensation for me, I shall not die. This surely is so. When God sent me to the world, there was His definite plan that He wanted to accomplish in me. Until God has accomplished this, I will not die among these winds and waves. The disciples should have known this (sermon preached on 28 Jan. 2001, my tr.; cf. YH Lee 2000:305).

If Kwak believes that everything on earth takes place under a divine dispensation, then, what is his view of life on earth? The crucial term that not only concerns his view of a divine dispensation, but also clearly reveals his view of life, is the image of pilgrimage. For Kwak, the meaning of life hinges on his perspective of pilgrimage that emphasizes otherworldliness (KB Min 2000:290; YH Lee 2000:313):

As today's passage shows, life is a pilgrimage. When we speak about travellers, there are three kinds of travellers. The first group is not aware of their identity as travellers. So, they try to acquire something, and persevere in this world; but every effort ends in vain. The second group knows that they are travellers. But these people think of the travelling only, and give up every sense of settlement or stability. Rather, they ride with the tide, and just eat and drink. 'For tomorrow we die, let us eat and drink now.' They are wanderers and secularists. The third group is travellers who know their final destination. Brothers and sisters, we believers have to transform from being travellers to being pilgrims. We are not travellers, but pilgrims (sermon preached on 14th Nov. 1999, my tr.).

For Kwak, since life is a pilgrimage towards the heavenly home, we do not need to remain attached to the world.

In a double sense, the Christian is both traveller and passenger. We live in this world, but we do not belong to this world. We live life looking up to the invisible God. We live life listening to the voice that others cannot hear. In other words, we are totally alien to worldly people. This is because our final goal is different (cited in YH Lee 2000:316; my tr.).

For Kwak, therefore, Christian life is a pilgrimage, en route to heaven. However, for Kwak, a pilgrimage life does not imply a pessimistic worldview. Kwak rather looks at life with an optimistic view (KB Min 2000:291; YH Lee 2000:320). The so-called 'pilgrimage ethic' more clearly describes his optimistic view of life. Kwak believes that, since human life is controlled by divine dispensation, Christians must live life in a more meaningful and valuable way:

Dearly beloved! Let's live our travelling lives in an attractive way. Let's live life in a good and beautiful way. Because life is short, should we not spend our time in the most beautiful, precious, and best way, during the short time that is allowed to me? (Kwak 1991:247).

Because all things are controlled by divine dispensation and God has willed our life on earth according to His great plan, life on earth acquires significance, and deserves our best efforts. We do not completely ignore the world we live in, but life acquires its significance only in relation to its final destination. In brief, the theological tension between an earthly mortal human existence and the divine dispensation is overcome in his optimistic view on the pilgrimage ethic.

4.2.7 Where is the sermon heading?

4.2.7.1 Individual effects

As briefly mentioned in 4.2.2, this sermon is supposed to provide an effective motivation for taking up any difficult task in life. Moreover, as examined before (4.2.6.2), Kwak continually emphasizes that every important event and suffering happens according to God's dispensation and His ultimate purpose. Thus, it is important to understand the burden of life and suffering in terms of the divine purpose, and obediently take up any difficult task or suffering. Since Kwak interprets the burden of life in terms of divine dispensation, according to YH Lee (2000:323), after reading or listening to Kwak's sermons, one's mind starts to feel comfortable; nothing compels us to hurry or hasten. Everything progresses as God has already determined. In the following sermon preached about the Israelite people who wandered in the wilderness for forty years, Kwak emphasizes the same aspect:

Brothers and sisters, we have various time views. One is to regard time according to the calendar. Another is physiological time. And there is also God's time. Thus, there is a tremendous gap between

my time and God's time. I am a mortal human being. Because I am a weak human, I am in a hurry. There is not enough time for me. But God has more than enough time. With Him, a thousand years are like a day, and a day is like a thousand years. Thus, we have to overcome our impatient and stuffy time view with God's great dispensation. As you know, when the Israelite people came out of Egypt, through desolate plains, and entered into Canaan, they wanted to reach it quickly. If they hurried, then, they could have reached it at least within fifteen days. But, it was forty years that God had in mind. You see, it took them forty years to pass through the wilderness, for which only two weeks would be enough. This was God's plan. This is God's time. We are too impatient and hasty. Thus, no matter how quickly we try to solve a problem, we just make many mistakes. No matter how quickly we try to become wealthy, we just lose many things. You have to know this. You have to endorse this time view, God's time view (sermon preached on 26 Jul. 1998, my tr.).

Since Kwak emphasizes that everything on earth takes place as God has predetermined, the listener to his sermon may feel comforted, as there is no need to hurry in life. "The matter had already been determined. Therefore, there is no reason for excuses", or hurry (P 18: L 24-5). This does not necessarily bring about a pessimistic attitude, since he also emphasizes the significance of life in terms of God's ultimate purpose, in which a human being's effort, or struggle against suffering acquires significance.

4.2.7.2 Ecclesial effects

Since Kwak continually emphasizes that we are pilgrims before God, who has predetermined our way, and that we have to follow God's time schedule, his messages not only induces a sense of comfort and stability in listeners' impatient minds, but also creates a unique communal consciousness. KM Lee (Feb 2000), a free contributor to the *Choson* monthly magazine, reports on this unique communal consciousness that exists in the congregation as follows:

For the collection of data, I attended the service three times. The most impressive point in the service was quietude. During the service, Rev. Kwak conducted all service orders, except the representative prayer, and removed the announcements in the service order so that the service consisted of hymn, preaching, and prayer only. It was not only quiet during the service time. Before and after the service, the whole congregation was also quiet and careful, just like a pupil who passes a classroom's corridor. This quietude continued in the churchyard and church bookstore after the service. At the lecture on church growth, Kwak says that a specialized church, whether in quietness or clapping in the service, can experience revival. Somang church specialized in quietude.

It will be an exaggeration to say that the congregation's quietude is caused by Kwak's sermons alone. As examined in 4.2.5.1, the congregation consists of well-educated people

and many of them have a high social status, which may contribute to an urbane modesty in the church. But it surely is not too much to say that Kwak's continual message that emphasizes the pilgrimage ethic under the divine dispensation may also play a significant role in causing a sense of comfort and calmness in the church.

Another possible ecclesial effect of the sermon is evident in his emphasis on the importance of anonymous sacrifice. He emphasizes, "If we have once resolved to serve others in the church, then, we should keep our resolve to the last point (P 18: L 30); because if we want to be recognized through service, our mind becomes disordered" (P 18: L 33). Based upon divine dispensation, each person's task has already been assigned according to individual talent and ability. According to KM Lee (Jan 2000), anonymous sacrifice and service is adopted as though being one of the Ten Commandments for church ministry in the Somang Church.

4.2.7.3 Socio-political effects

This sermon is a good starting point if we wish to discuss the socio-political aspects of a sermon, since Kwak implicitly ignores the possible positive role of a socio-political declaration in a certain difficult situation. He says:

We sometimes see many declarations made by Christians, and by the churches, or arising from certain circumstances. These declarations are published in newspapers. But what I think is this: there is no need for a Christian to make a declaration. There is no excuse necessary for those who believe in God. Why is a declaration necessary? (P 19: L 17-20).

We can understand his negative view on the necessity of socio-political declarations as this arises from his firm conviction of the divine dispensation. For him, everything seems "to be determined by the individual relationship between God and self," rather than by a socio-political declaration and struggle (*cf.* P 19: L 17). Thus, in a certain sense, his sermon is likely to bring about a more action-centred effect, as he dislikes verbal declarations or excuses. In this light, his fervent relief work for North Korea, done in silence, also can be seen to be in harmony with his refusal to agree to an interview. For him, it is more important to make a resolution and to practise what must be done, rather than to make a declaration or to express what must be done.

However, when we evaluate this view in a broader theological frame, we find that Kwak has a rather passive attitude on Christianity's socio-political responsibility. This is more clearly revealed in his view on the separation of state and church. We could find a possible clue to understand his view on Christianity's socio-political role from the following

sermon:

Here we need to point out one thing. Does God appoint only the good king? No, He does not. There are so many bad kings in the world. But in the Bible God reigns over even the bad king ... Therefore, when God wants to punish and exterminate bad men, He uses an even worse King. Because God has appointed and placed them there, we have to obey them just as we obey God. As the Author of history, God works through these powerful men. With this in mind, we have to obey them (SH Kwak 1997:750-752, my tr.).

Here Kwak reveals a rather passive attitude in respect of Christianity's socio-political role. Because of this and the Lutheran view of separation between state and church, HK Kim (2000:361; *cf.* also KM Lee Jan 2000) in his evaluation states that this sermon lacks a prophetic role to challenge a society in respect of socio-political injustice, and mainly adheres to the priestly function to console the wounded.

4.3 Conclusion

Kwak is well aware of the fact that God comes and speaks to us through preaching; preaching is therefore an opportunity to be a witness to the presence of God:

Preaching is neither a mere religious lecture, nor Bible study exposition. Just as the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us, the Word is continually incarnated through the church, sacrament, and preaching, and reveals the work for life among us.... I believe that preaching is the living Word of God that is given to us in this time (Kwak 1990; cited in Shin 1998:62).

As regards the presence of God in preaching, that which pervades Kwak's whole sermonic world is "to proclaim Jesus Christ, the center of the Written Word" (MS Shin 1998:61). As examined before (4.2.4), Kwak emphasizes, "It is the cross and resurrection of Jesus that is the most fundamental and important doctrine that Christianity teaches" (Kwak 1992:95). According to Kwak, "preaching is to proclaim the presence and salvation of Jesus Christ with the Written Word in the work of the Spirit" (Kwak 1990:10). With this priority in mind, he prefers to preach on Gospel passages, which are directly about the kerygmatic faith of Christianity.

In addition to the kerygmatic message of the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ, another important subject that underlies Kwak's sermons is the pilgrimage ethic under divine dispensation, which not only offers an optimistic worldview to the listeners, but also helps them to overcome human suffering. As examined in 4.2.6, his view of the divine dispensation is also well interwoven with his view on the divine presence, also in preaching.

For him, an effective way to interweave his perspective of the divine dispensation with his witness on the divine presence is by an imaginary and storytelling delivery mode. Since the main portion of the congregation consists of well-educated and urbanized egalitarian people, the non-authoritative and indirect mode of persuasion through imaginary and storytelling deployment contributes greatly towards their acceptance of what the preacher intends in the sermon.

is well known for its laity discipleship training. As a young pastor, Oak is involved in youth ministry in college, and then in a ministry for the laity. He believes that discipleship training is the key to building a healthy church. Oak's book, "Disciple Making Ministries International" (TBM) and "Witnessing Through Discipleship" (TBM) were published in 1983. Oak returned from the United States in order to carry on an evangelistic mission in Korea. He founded SaRang Church together with nine fellow missionaries. The church has a vision of training lay leaders, youth ministers, and evangelists. The church has now proliferated to more than 20,000 adult members and 10,000 students attending a Sunday service, with 81 pastors, 20 evangelists, 1,000 lay leaders and 1000 Sunday school teachers. One of the most remarkable aspects of the remarkable church growth can be found in Oak's unique lay ministry. For more than 20 years, he has not only been ministering to the church, but also been training in mind, but has also been helping other pastors to apply the same principle inside and outside the country. In his book, "Disciple Making Ministries International," he encourages churches to equip the laity in the light of the church's apostolic nature. He did not become witnesses for the Gospel like the disciples of the early church. Since its publication in 1983, this book has resappeared in English, Japanese, and Chinese editions, and the Korean version has already been published. Based upon the principles of the book, "Disciple Making Ministries International" was established in 1985 as a lay ministry. Since the 33 Korean pastors who were first trained in 1986, more than 3000 pastors inside and outside the country have completed the training course. As a result, hundreds of pastors, not only in Korea, but also in Japan and Taiwan, have successfully grafted the discipleship training ministry for the laity into their churches. In addition, SaRang Community Church has been conducting a "Great Awakening Evangelism Rally" for the purpose of evangelism. Since this rally started in 1982, the church has invited unbelievers once a year, allowing them to hear the evangelistic Gospel, and leading them to a resolution to become born-again Christians. During the rally conducted from 21st to 24th October 2001, 2340 persons (non-Christians) attended the rally, and 2756 persons resolved to become

Chapter five

Analysis of Han Hum Oak's sermon

5.1 Biographical profile

Rev Han Hum Oak is the senior pastor of SaRang Community Church, Seoul, Korea, which is well known for its laity discipleship training and the remarkable church growth driven by this laity training ministry. As a young pastor, while he served several churches and was involved in youth ministry to college students, Oak became increasingly interested in discipleship training as the key to building a healthy and vibrant church. His vision for laity discipleship training for building a healthy church was gradually formed during his three years' study at Calvin (ThM) and Westminster Theological Seminaries. In 1978, after returning from the United States in order to carry out an ardent call to the ministry, Oak founded SaRang Church together with nine founding members. Beginning with a three-fold vision of training lay leaders, youth missions, and missions to the Communist world, the church has now proliferated to more than 20,000 adult members and 5000 Sunday school students attending a Sunday service, with 81 pastors, 20 elders, 4181 deacons, 1500 lay leaders and 1000 Sunday school teachers. One of the most important reasons for the remarkable church growth can be found in Oak's unique laity-training ministry. For more than 20 years, he has not only been ministering to the church, with laity discipleship training in mind, but has also been helping other pastors to apply this laity-centred ministry principle inside and outside the country. In his book, *Called to awaken the laity*, Oak urges churches to equip the laity in the light of the church's apostolic nature, so that they may become witnesses for the Gospel like the disciples of the early church. Since its publication in 1983, this book has reappeared in English, Japanese, and Chinese versions, and the 50th Korean version has already been published. Based upon the principles of the book and his ministry, "Disciple Making Ministries International" was established in 1986 to equip other pastors, also Japanese and Taiwanese pastors, in discipleship training ministry for the laity. Since the 83 Korean pastors who were first trained in 1986, more than 5000 pastors inside and outside the country have completed the training course. As a result, hundreds of pastors, not only in Korea, but also in Japan and Taiwan, have successfully grafted the discipleship training ministry for the laity into their churches. In addition, SaRang Community Church has been conducting a "Great Awakening Evangelism Rally" for the purpose of evangelism. Since this rally started in 1982, the church has invited unbelievers once a year, allowing them to hear the evangelistic Gospel, and leading them to a resolution to become born-again Christians. During the rally conducted from 21st to 24th October 2001, 5310 persons (non-Christians) attended the rally, and 2756 persons resolved to become

Christians and to believe in Jesus Christ as their Saviour. Furthermore, as the Chairman for many consecutive years of the "Council of Pastors for Church Renewal" and through social relief activities, he has exerted an extensive evangelical influence in Korea. Thus, after studying Oak's evangelical ministry for more than 20 years in Korea, professor YG Park, who teaches at Chongshin Theological Seminary, evaluates the SaRang Church, where Oak has been ministering, as a model churches for the success of evangelical churches in Korea (YG Park 1998:278).

5.2 Sermon analysis

We can suggest many reasons for the phenomenal growth of the SaRang Church, such as Oak's devotional integrity, discipleship training ministry for the laity (*cf.* his sermon preached on 6 Dec. 1998), the geographically good position of the Church, and the intimate gathering of the congregation. Professor SS Kwon (1997:69) suggests the following three backgrounds for the growth:

- (1) Training lay leaders as 'little pastors' who actively and sacrificially share the burden of Rev. Oak's pastoral ministry, (2) the term ministry of associate pastors who maintain good relations with one another as genuine brothers and sisters in Christ, and (3) Rev. Oak's excellent preaching with penetrating insights both into the Bible and into the minds of the congregation.

As Kwon rightly remarks, Rev Oak's preaching should be considered as one of the crucial reasons for the remarkable church growth, although not the only reason (SE Lee 1995:61; HJ Choi 1998:118). According to Kwon (1997:69), approximately 10,000 copies of his Sunday sermons are sold each week and meet the spiritual needs of many Korean Christians. His sermons are continually being published, up to date in more than 15 books. Among them, the book, *There is a purpose in suffering*, was first published in 1983, and its 61st edition will be published in November 2001. Because of his sermonic excellence (as mentioned in 1.4.2.2), 2000 Korean seminarians selected Oak in 1999 as one of three best preachers in Korea. In addition, several homiletical students studied his sermons. In 1995, SE Lee examined Oak's view of preaching and his sermonic methods, and traced Calvinistic elements in his sermons. In 1997, Kwon briefly analysed his sermons mainly in terms of grammatical, historical, and theological interpretation. In the same year, HS Kim examined Oak's sermons in the light of hermeneutics. While reporting on Oak's extensive ministries, KM Lee (Nov 2000), a free contributor to the *Choson* monthly magazine, also briefly mentioned Oak's sermons.

However, a more comprehensive homiletical examination, which reveals the homiletical significance of Oak's sermons especially in relation to its witness of the divine presence, is

still lacking. Thus, in our study, his sermon will be examined and evaluated mainly in these terms, leaving to other studies the other general aspects of his ministry, such as his influence upon the Korean church through his discipleship training ministry for the laity, evangelical movement, or church renewal movement. As mentioned before (1.4.2.2), I selected a sermon that was preached on the passage of "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God," since this sermon illustrates his methodology in proclaiming the divine presence. After examining the selected sermon, in order to maximize the analytical accuracy, the scripts of a further 98 sermons that he has preached during the last five years, will also be referred to, if necessary.

5.2.1 Sermon outline

This is one of his consecutive sermons about 'the Sermon on the Mount' (hereafter SM). Oak starts this sermon with a frank confession that, for him, this passage is very difficult to preach about. He, therefore, wishes that the Holy Spirit would help the listener to realize the meaning of the passage. To begin with, Oak presents a universally valid proposition that Christians must live a life similar to non-believers who are looking for some sense in this world (P 21: L 28-29). Based upon this seemingly valid proposition, he further develops another proposition that, although Christians must live similarly to non-believers, Christians are totally different from non-believers in that they are people who see God with eyes of the heart (P 21: L 34). Now, he turns to the biblical passage that he refers to in the sermon, and explains the biblical meaning of 'to see God.' Based upon Ephesians 1:17-19, he explains further the meaning of 'to see God' in the light of 'to know God' (P 22: L 24 – P 23: L 17). After confirming that knowing and seeing God are connected, the preacher further explains the meaning of a pure heart – a crucial requirements for seeing God - in relation to sin and a double-hearted mind (P 23: L 27-30). For him, primarily, sin makes our hearts unclean (P 23: L 36). So, in order to make our hearts pure, we should not commit sins. The second meaning of 'the pure in heart' is not to have a divided heart (P 24: L 21). So, in order to keep our hearts pure, we must banish things that divide our hearts (P 24: L 34). After confirming that Christians must remain single-minded in such a way as to see God, the preacher turns to challenge listeners about whether they have a holy passion to see God (P 24: L 35-37). Oak also emphasizes that if we have these desires, then we must get rid of whatever makes our hearts unclean (P 25: L 1). After reminding us of the fact that we can know and see only one of God's many attributes, the preacher introduces three men of faith, who have done just this in their lives: Abraham (P 26: L 10-23), David (P 26: L 24-32), and Livingstone (P 26: L 33- P 27:1). The preacher also introduces an image of God, which is meaningful to him, i.e. the God of mercy and compassion, who makes up for his own weakness (P 27: L 2-12). After again encouraging the listener to look upon God only,

the preacher ends the sermon with an effective illustration, in which he shouts urging the listeners not to look upon worldly things, but to look up to God only (P 28: L 17ff). Thus, the whole sermon revolves around the following two poles: the believer's endeavour to keep a pure heart and the divine blessing to see God clearly, bound together with a synergistic relationship (P 25: L 10).

5.2.2 What is the initial impression of the sermon?

After listening to the taped sermon and reading the script of the sermon, I had the following two initial impressions: the first is about the preacher's sermonic integrity to do his best in preaching the Word of God without any compromise to his congregation. As he briefly mentioned in this sermon, the passage seems too difficult to be preached on easily, since it speaks about seeing the invisible God. In spite of the difficulty, however, Oak must have felt the responsibility and burden to preach on it, as these biblical passages also belong to the Word of God (*cf.* sermon preached on 13 Feb. 2000). Thus, in this sermon, Oak tries his best to preach the Word of God just as it is written in the Bible, without any adjustment (*cf.* P 21: L 2-11). In this respect, Oak sets a good example of a preacher's sermonic responsibility to preach even on troublesome passages, without any compromise.

Secondly, related to the first impression, this sermon displays the preacher's burning desire and passion to encourage the listener to see only God. As he admits, 'his sermons are too long and forceful to be attractive' (Kwon 1997:89). This sermon also is too long and revolves mainly around both an authoritative persuasion and logical explanation, which could easily have a negative effect on listeners. Nevertheless, in this sermon, listeners meet a preacher who ardently preaches a passage that explains how one can see God and enjoy divine blessing. With his burning desire to help the congregation to enjoy this blessing, he sometimes uses a very loud voice in urging the listeners to look upon God only (*cf.* P 24: L 35; P 25: L 20-22; P 28: L 21). Thus, as regards the intention of the sermon, his passion and method of preaching, I felt that the preacher fervently urges the congregation to look up to God only, without a blur in their spiritual eyes.

Thirdly, in a sense, this sermon may raise some doubts about the obvious relationship between 'to see God with a pure heart' and 'to have trouble in life' in terms of theodicy. Here, the preacher firmly states that, if we live life in such a way as to see God clearly, many tribulations will not befall us (P 28: L 10). He does not mean that trauma never comes to the lives of those who clearly see God with a pure heart; he rather implies that those who clearly see God with a pure heart will overcome such tribulations. With this in mind, he urges the congregation to discover the reason for their troubles in the light of seeing God and of a pure heart, so that they might overcome them. Through this affirmation, on the one

hand, listeners may find latent reasons for their trauma in respect of a failure to see God with a pure heart, and be determined to cleanse their hearts, to refrain from sin, and to remain with God with only a single-hearted attitude. However, on the other hand, these affirmations may fall short of proclaiming the graceful and compassionate attributes of God who still waits for, and works for, those who are so hopeless and desperate that they cannot make a firm decision to remain with God only with a pure heart. As we shall see, this does not necessarily mean that Oak neglects to witness about God's compassionate nature in the sermon. In order to secure a more comprehensive evaluation, we must examine the congregational context in which he emphasizes his ethical beliefs, and refer to his other sermons that further reveal his perspective on this matter.

5.2.3 What kind of God does the preacher witness to in the sermon?

Basically speaking, we could say that the God whom Oak proclaims in this sermon, is expressed in the following two images: the compassionate and consoling God with His love and mercy, and the God who wants ethical responsibility and commitment according to His holy name. In this sermon that is about 'seeing God in a pure heart,' the listeners receive various images of God. After affirming the Scriptural fact that those who see God are very happy because of a pure heart, the preacher refers to His various attributes, such as God the Creator of the whole universe, or the almighty God who raises the dead and calls things that are not as though they were (P 25: L 21-22). In addition, Oak continually introduces other images of God, in connection with three men of faith: the God of Abraham with the power to do what He promised, i.e. the faithful and almighty God; the God of David, who, like a shepherd, allowed His people to lie down in green pastures; and the forgiving God who is pleased with a broken and contrite heart; and God Immanuel whom Livingstone looked up to throughout his life (P 26: L 10 – P 27:1). Oak again refers to the God of mercy and compassion who makes up for his weakness with His compassion as the One whom he, himself, sees every day (P 27: L 2-12).

When we examine these faces of God that Oak introduces in this sermon, we meet the compassionate, consoling God, whose presence Oak witnesses to in this sermon. In addition, Oak confesses that, due to the burden of his ministry, he occasionally looks up to 'the God of mercy and compassion, who says OK even to his mistakes, who makes up for his weakness with His compassion, who does not pay back punishment for sin, evil for evil, and who is patient with His abundant mercy toward him' (P 27: L 9-12). With reference to other sermons that he has preached until today, we can also identify identical faces of God. In the sermon preached about the resurrected Jesus who visited the disciples while fishing at the Sea of Galilee (John 21:1-14), Oak speaks about the same God, who visits failures

and consoles them with His compassion:

Hebrews 4:15 says, "We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are." He sympathizes with our every weakness; He knows our hunger; He knows our weariness, our sleeplessness at night; He knows that our hearts are depressed by failure. Our Lord well knows our situation when there is nothing that pleases us. Thus, he says, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. With the warm bread and fish I will give you rest" (sermon preached on Easter Sunday, 4 Apr. 1999, my tr.).

A similar image of God that Oak prefers also portrays the humble God. In the sermon preached about Jesus who entered Jerusalem riding a donkey's colt (John 12:12-19), Oak draws a picture of a humble God who is present with the weak and the poor:

Dear brothers and sisters! Whenever we call on Jesus in this world, whenever we draw near to Jesus, whenever we pour out our hearts to Him, is the Jesus who visits us such a fierce Jesus? I have believed in this Jesus for 40 to 50 years - since I gained my senses. Whenever I called Him, the Jesus who met me was not so fierce and dazzling that I could not go near. Whenever He met me, he was the humble Jesus on a donkey's colt. It is still the same now. No one can come close to a King on a high warhorse wearing an imperial crown and holding a baton in his hand, passing by escorted by many soldiers. But, because He is such a humble King who comes seated on a donkey's colt, even a child can touch Him and pull at His clothes. How wonderful He is! Jesus is this humble King (sermon preached on 15 Jun. 1997, my tr.).

In these sermons we can identify but one of the images of God that Oak often uses in his preaching, i.e. a compassionate, consoling God with abundant mercy and love for His children. He also implements other important biblical images of God that are contrary to a consoling image, such as the God who firmly demands repentance of sins or obedience to the Word of God. One of the salient images of God that is implied in the analyzed sermon is a God who seeks a pure and undivided heart. By emphasizing the fact that, in order to see God clearly, believers must not sin but keep their hearts pure and undivided, Oak indirectly but firmly relates the divine presence of God to believers' ethical responsibility. Oak's emphasis on ethical responsibility is clearly evident in his other sermons. In the sermon preached about righteousness that surpasses that of the Pharisees (Matt 5:20), Oak holds forth a more violent image of God that may burden the listeners' consciousness:

By the way, whenever the holy God sees people who do not obey what they believe, and just "make a noise with the mouth," saying that they are believers in God, how frustrated He must feel! How can God admit these people into the kingdom of heaven? Think about it: Is a faith so full of contradiction

capable of entering the kingdom of heaven? That faith is surely false. What God emphasizes is rather these words; "You are a holy man. Thus, when you live your life in this world, obey God and win the victory. Thus, brothers and sisters, be sure to obey the Word. Please remember this: do not live the life of a loser. What is the righteousness that surpasses that of Pharisees and teachers of the law? It is the righteousness of those who have obedient faith. Amen! (sermon preached on 17 Sep. 2000, my tr.).

In a sermon preached about a Christian's honesty (Matt 5:33-37), Oak also fiercely criticizes contemporary Korean Christians who easily seem to tell a lie, as follows:

For some time now, people have no longer believed in what the pastors say. The well-known fact that people consider a pastor to be less honest than even Buddhist monks or reporters has been revealed by public opinion poll. Then, how can this country become honest and clean? Not many people still wish to believe in statistics that the Korean church produces. If the church, the so-called light of the world, is so dark, then how can the future of the country be seen? I, who must preach about this fact, also feel like hiding in a mousehole, with shame. Confronted by these circumstances with which I am not involved, confronted by the gloomy reality that I cannot change by myself, I feel I'd rather run away somewhere with shame. In terms of morals, our country is in trouble. We all have to admit this fact. Dear brothers and sisters! What must we learn today from Jesus' lesson? What voice of revelation should we listen to? It is God's voice that His children must be honest. Dear brothers and sisters! Are you honest? I also ask myself, "Reverend Oak, are you honest?" As individuals we all must ask ourselves: How honest are we? (Sermon preached on 17 Dec. 2000, my tr.)

Oak sometimes implements more acrid, severe images of God. Because of these acrid and severe sermons, he is often called 'the fierce preacher' (*cf.* the sermon preached on 4 Apr. 1999; Kwon 1997:89). Thus, in essence Oak implements two images of God in his sermon: on the one hand, He who consoles His children with loving compassion and mercy and, on the other hand, this God also asks for the believer's ethical commitment and responsibility.

In addition to these two faces of God, Oak's evangelical message of spiritual salvation must also be mentioned, as this also illustrates an important attribute of God as witnessed in Oak's other sermons. One of the important images of God that Oak prefers to use in all his sermons is Jesus Christ whom human beings must believe in for salvation and eternal life. For example, in the sermon preached about salvation, free from the curse of the law (Gal 3:12-14), Oak turns his sermon into an evangelical proclamation in order to invite non-believers into faith in God as follows:

Brother and sisters! Some of you still do not believe in Jesus Christ. I hope that the Holy Spirit will open your hearts at this time, and help you to realize this Word. Brothers and sisters! Don't you believe in God? Don't you believe in Jesus? You may consider yourselves, who are not bound by

Christianity or the church, as free people. But, you are not free. You are bound by sin. Sin is controlling you. So, I want you to return to the bosom of Jesus Christ who set us free from sin (sermon preached on 20 Jun. 1999, my tr.).

Other examples, where Oak preaches in an evangelical mode with non-believers in mind, are easily found in other sermons. For example:

Among us, are there any brothers and sisters who have not accepted the Lord of peace? Please believe in Jesus. Please receive forgiveness of sin, end the hostile relationship with God, and be reconciled with God. Is there anyone who does not know about Jesus, anybody who does not possess and experience this peace? Open the Word of God, and learn about Jesus Christ who came to this world for us. Come closer to Him and look upon His glory (sermon preached on 19 Dec. 1999, my tr. *Cf.*, also sermons preached on 14 Mar. 1999, 19 Dec. 1999, 30 Jan. 2000 and 2 Apr. 2000).

These and other sermons clearly indicate Oak's evangelistic passion for, and witnessing of Jesus Christ as the Saviour. Thus, in summary, the dominant images of God which Oak prefers in his sermons, revolve around mainly the following three messages: Jesus Christ as the Saviour of all, the consoling God who has compassion and mercy for His children, and the God who asks for ethical commitment and responsibility in accordance with His holy name.

5.2.4 How does the preacher deal with the Scriptures?

Because the analyzed sermon is based on only one passage (Matt 5:8), we need to refer to his other sermons in order to understand the other possible variables of interpretation in his methodology. To find out how Oak deals with the Scriptures in this sermons, we shall examine the following three concerns: first, his firm conviction regarding the Scripture in which God speaks to His people when it is sincerely preached without any compromise; secondly, the interpretative perspective of the SM in relation to its practicability during the interim period before the Second Advent of Jesus Christ; and, thirdly, how he explicates the message for the listener.

Our first interpretative concern regards his firm conviction that the Scriptures should be preached as they are written, without any compromise, and his belief in the illumination of the Holy Spirit to help the preacher to preach the Word of God. On the one hand, Oak sometimes finds difficulty in preaching about problematic passages. For example, he finds the SM to be a very troublesome passage to preach about, because the preacher himself also easily fails to measure up to the standards of the SM. In commencing his first sermon about the SM (Matt 5:1-12), Oak for instance frankly confessed his limitation to preach on

persecution:

In the Scriptures, there are so many dreadful Words for the preacher to preach on. So, preachers sometimes avoid these Words, and sometimes feel compelled to preach about them. Today's passage is an example. This passage is called the 'Beatitudes of the Mount' or the 'Sermon on the Mount,' as the Lord taught these Words especially on the Mount. The Sermon on the Mount is one of the passages which I find a burden and difficult to preach about. When I am to preach on such a passage as 'Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness', not only do I think 'Am I to become one of those who will be persecuted because of righteousness?', but I also lose confidence because I have never experienced persecution (sermon preached on 13 Feb. 2000, my tr.).

In this sermon, Oak clearly confesses that he is incompetent to preach on persecution, as he has never experienced persecution. In his interview with Prof SS Kwon (cited in 1997:87), he frankly confesses his difficulty in preaching the Word of God as follows:

Another difficulty is that now and then my heart does not follow what my mouth preaches. But even if my heart does not keep up with my mouth, I am still bound to preach and communicate the biblical truth with the conviction that it is God's unchanging truth. Still, another difficulty is that I cannot put what I preach into practice as a model Christian. Then, I feel with an ache that I may fall into hypocrisy

As also implied in the sermon that is examined in our study, Oak struggled with this passage (Matt 5:8) "by knowing how difficult it is for him to preach the Word so that all of the congregations may be able to receive the Word as the voice of the living God" (P 21: L 7). Aware of the fact that he is incompetent to preach the Word in such a way that listeners are able to hear the voice of the living God, he occasionally frankly confesses his limitation to rightly preach the Word of God.

However, on the other hand, as the first sentence of the sermon also clearly confirms, Oak knows well that "a preacher has the responsibility to preach the Word in such a way that all of the believers are able to understand and realize it well" (P 21: L 2-3). Moreover, he recognizes the fact that "even though the preacher is not able to measure up to all Words of God, he/she is commissioned by solemn commandment to preach all of the Word of God without any compromise" (sermon preached on 13 Feb. 2000).

Standing between the two poles of a human impossibility to preach the Word of God and the solemn commission and responsibility, he turns to the illumination of the Holy Spirit who guides the preacher and the listener in order to have the Word of God rightly preached and understood. This is why, in his sermons, Oak frequently refers to the work of the Holy

Spirit who helps listeners to hear the Word of God as it is preached. He says "So I pray that the Holy Spirit will touch your heart and help each one of you even through this poor sermon so that you may be able to understand the meaning of the passage, and to listen to the voice of God for your sake today" (P 21: L 9-11). This sermon, in which he mentions the work of the Holy Spirit who helps the preacher and listeners during delivery of the sermon is not a rare exception (*cf.* sermons preached on 27 Apr. 1997, 24 Jan. 1999, and 2 Jan. 2000).

Because of his firm conviction about the work of the Holy Spirit in preaching, Oak determines to preach all of the Word of God sincerely as written in the Scriptures, without compromise. For, when he preaches sincerely, even on persecution, God speaks to his people, even through this poor sermon, and offers His grace (*cf.* also sermons preached on 21 May 2000 and 14 Jan. 2001). He says, "Even though these Words are burdensome to listen to and obey, since they pierce our sore place, and reveal our shameful place, we have to stick to them" (sermon preached on 17 Dec. 2000). In conclusion, we could state that one of the important interpretative points of departure for him when tackling this passage (Matt 5:8) arises from his firm conviction both on the Scriptures as the Word of God that should be preached as written without compromise, and on the illumination of the Holy Spirit that helps the preacher to preach the "impossible" Word of God.

Our second interpretative concern is in regard to Oak's perspective on the SM especially in relation to its practicability in the church. Many debates have taken place concerning this matter: Was the SM intended to measure up to an average Christian? Does it merely represent unrealistic Utopianism? Is it an invitation to asceticism for the so-called 'religious'? Was it intended to demonstrate the need for grace and hence drive us to the Gospel? Does it represent, in reality, Jesus Christ Himself, the Commander who commends the SM? Or does it point only to personal ethics, or does it also intend a social dimension? These issues deserve fuller discussion than this study can accommodate. Generally speaking, the SM presents both the ultimate end for God's people and graceful means towards that end:

The end, the ultimate end, is divine sonship (Matt 5:9,45), which means firstly being like God, both in this world and the world to come (5:48). The means to this end, given by grace, are certain moral qualities, which are embodied by God's Son (*cf.* Matt 8-28), and the loving, kenotic, radical acts they engender, all of which may be summed up as *δικαιοσύνη* and its fruits: poverty of spirit, purity of heart, love of enemy (Davies 1991:308).

In short, "the SM, as both gift and demand of God, leaves us in unresolved tension between being accepted as we are yet called to perfection" (Stagg 1983:219). Although the SM

seems to describe the idealistic ethics of the kingdom of God, it also invites His people to be perfect according to God's holy name. In this sense, the SM must be preached in the church that is on its way to the divine perfection of the kingdom of God. "The SM is not for auditors; it is for students subject to examination and all course requirements A true disciple may fall woefully short of this high command, but there is no authentic discipleship apart from honest commitment to the claims of this SM" (Stagg 1983:228).

This perspective of the practicability of the SM can be also applied to the passage that Oak tackled for the sermon; "Blessed are the pure in heart for they will see God" (Matt 5:8). On the one hand, we can consider that, in this passage, Jesus proclaims the holy and solemn identity of God's people as those who see God with a pure heart. In his proclamation of those who see God because of a pure heart, "μακάριοι οἱ καθαροὶ τῇ καρδίᾳ, ὅτι αὐτοὶ τὸν θεὸν ὄψονται" Jesus not only confirms the identity of the people of the kingdom of God as those who see God with pure hearts, but also offers this solemn identity to those who are invited from the world into the kingdom of God. With this in mind, Oak willingly confirms, "the attendants of the service are worshipping God because they are those who have the eyes to see God" (P 22: L 8-9).

However, Oak does not seem to be satisfied with merely proclaiming this solemn identity in such a way that the congregation recognizes their new identity; rather he seems to have a burning desire for the congregation to achieve this new identity in their lives. For Oak, this passage (Matt 5:8) is not only a divine gift to offer as a new identity for the chosen people of the kingdom, but also a divine invitation towards perfection, according to God's holy name. In addition, an important reason for Oak to interpret this passage mainly in the light of the believer's ethical responsibility arises from his view of the congregational context. For him, the congregation are not only God's people chosen from the world according to His grace, but they are also Christ's disciples who will be sent to the world to proclaim His Gospel. In addition, witnessing the ethical negligence and failure of Korean Christians in their socio-political situation, Oak seems to have been determined to interpret this passage in the light of the believer's ethical responsibility. Thus, in conclusion, we can accept that the sermon's interpretative structure reveals the preacher's preference for an ethical emphasis on the passage, because he considers the congregational context. A more detailed examination of congregational variables in Oak's sermon will be dealt with later (5.2.5.1).

Our last concern relative to the interpretative characteristics of the sermon is: How does the preacher interpret the passage and develop its message? According to Kwon (1997:71), when interpreting the given passage in his sermon, Oak pays close attention to the following three aspects: the biblical, grammatical, and historical contexts. Firstly, in this

sermon, the grammatical consideration leads the preacher to the conclusion that the passage not so much emphasizes Jesus' solemn proclamation of the new identity offered by the grace of God, as the believer's ethical responsibility and commitment. Secondly, in his first sermon on the SM, Oak discussed the historical context of the given passage in detail (cf. sermon preached on 13 Feb. 2000). Thirdly, this sermon is a good example of the important Calvinistic interpretation principle, namely to explicate a given passage in terms of other related passages: *Sacra Scriptura sui ipsius interpres* (cf. Potgieter 1982:129; SE Lee 1995:56; MJ Ahn 1998:260-273).

In this sermon, in order to explicate the meaning of 'to see God' (Matthew 5:8), Oak turns to Ephesians 1:17-19, where the meaning of 'to see God more clearly' is illuminated in the light of 'to know God better.' Based upon this related passage, Oak confirms that there is no difference at all between 'to see God' and 'to know God' (P 23: L 10). When he tries to explicate the meaning of a pure heart in relation to an undivided heart, he quotes Matthew 6:24 in order to show clearly that his interpretation of a pure heart is firmly based upon Scriptural legitimation. In the context of Matthew 6:22-23, which describes the eyes as the lamp of the body, Oak furthermore confirms, "if the heart is divided, then, God cannot be seen." Reliance on other related passages can continually be found, for instance in his quotations of James 4:8 (P 25: L 12), Moses' prayer (P 26: 1-5), Abraham's faith as described in Romans 4:17 (P 26: L 17), and David's faith (P 26: L 24-32). Through these consecutive quotations of Scriptural passages and figures, the listener receives the impression that Oak's message is firmly grounded upon the Word of God itself. To summarize: the interpretative characteristics of this sermon revolve around the following three aspects: his firm conviction that the Bible is the Word of God to be sincerely preached without any compromise and that the illumination of the Holy Spirit will help human preachers and congregations to realize it; the preacher's concern for the believer's perfection as implied in the SM; and, lastly, Scriptural reference as one of the Calvinistic interpretation principles.

5.2.5 How is the preacher's relationship with the listeners?

5.2.5.1 The preacher's view of the congregation

As mentioned in 5.1, the SaRang Community Church, where Oak has been ministering for more than 20 years, is well known for its discipleship training ministry for the laity. This fact offers us a good starting point to examine his view of the congregation. As briefly implied before, it is not too much to say that Rev Oak devotes his whole ministry to the vision of discipleship training for the laity. In his sermon entitled, "We are little Jesuses," Oak introduces and summarizes his 20 years' ardent passion for this ministry, as follows:

The ministry philosophy and vision, which I have envisaged since I planted SaRang church 20 years ago, can be described as follows: Let us make the people within the church Jesus' disciples and send them to the world. And, through them, let us guide the people in the world into the church and again make them Jesus' disciples, so that this church may glorify the Lord's name and let the kingdom come on this earth, and so that God's will may be done on earth as it is in heaven, and at last that the kingdom and the power and the glory may be attributed to God. This was my dream and wish. The disciple-making ministry is not only a ministry for which we have been striving for the last 20 years, but also a ministry that should continue constantly until the age that the Lord comes. For this is surely the most important nature and focus of the ministry that the Lord commanded to our church (sermon preached on 13 Dec. 1998).

In this sermon, we are able not only to hear Oak's burning passion for the laity's discipleship training ministry, but also identify his view of the congregation. For him, the congregation is not only people of God chosen out of the world, but also Christ's disciples to be sent to the world in order to proclaim the Gospel. This also describes the church that Oak envisages. In his important book, *Called to awaken the laity*, which contains the whole theoretical foundation of the laity's discipleship-training ministry, Oak (2001:83,93ff) describes the church as follows: "The church is God's people chosen out of the world, and at the same time Christ's disciples sent into the world in order to witness about God and His gospel."

One of his motivations to seek a sounder ecclesiology, started from his dissatisfaction with traditional ecclesiology that emphasizes only one side of the church's attributes. For him, the traditional Protestant ecclesiology was developed mainly by Reformers, whose first concern was the purity of the church in their context, being confronted by the Roman Catholic Church. Therefore they mainly emphasized the purity of the church by understanding the church as "God's people chosen out of the world" (Oak 2001:88ff). However, for Oak, this definition gives the church a sense of being home in the Father's house, resting after a long journey, while ignoring the divine calling and commission to the world left behind (2001:79). As a result, the majority of the laity sought heaven only, and lacked a lucid self-conscious desire to accomplish their God-given commission and responsibility.

However, using the perspective of the church's apostolic nature, as eloquently emphasized by Hans Küng, Oak reformulated his view of the church and ministry in such a way as to mobilize and activate the tardy laity in the church, as Jesus' commission directs (Oak 2000:333 No 16). He believed that this bilateral definition of Christ's disciples, namely to be sent to the world in order to accomplish her commission, as well as to gather God's

people chosen out of the world, could aid the contemporary church in acquiring a healthy self-consciousness to accomplish her divine commission for the world.

Therefore, based upon his balanced and healthy view on ecclesiology, Oak also understands the local congregation in a bilateral sense: coming into the church and going into the world, in a centripetal and centrifugal fashion. This corresponds with the images of God used in his sermon, namely as a God of compassion, and a God who asks believers for ethical responsibility. This is firmly based upon and derived from what he believes about the church: both the gathering of God's people chosen out of the world and Christ's disciples sent to the world.

5.2.5.2 Rhetorical characteristics of the sermon

In this sermon, we can identify the following rhetorical characteristics, which also illustrate the preacher's unique methodology: his view of the listeners, and his perspective of God whom he proclaims in this sermon; a profound elaboration of the given biblical text; his dialogic delivery mode with consecutive questions; and his strong appeal with a direct thrust to the heart.

Firstly, as also demonstrated in this sermon, the former part of Oak's sermons normally consists of a profound elaboration of the meaning of the given passage. Here the question is: What is the meaning of 'to see God' and 'to have a pure heart'? In order to help the listener to rightly understand the meaning of the text, Oak elaborates it in the light of other related texts (as examined in 5.2.4). This observation is also found in Kwon's (1997:70) analysis of Oak's sermons:

He delves into the text and elaborates on it rather long (twenty to twenty five minutes). While he is explaining the context and content of the biblical text, he does not divert the attention of his audience to something amusing and exciting outside the text. He does not try to please and adulate them; rather he remains faithful to the text, binding himself and his congregation to it, in a somewhat tiring way.

In the interview with Prof Kwon (1997:89) as regards preaching, Oak expresses his endeavour to explicate profoundly the meaning of a biblical text in a sermon as follows; "I find that there are a lot of basic problems in many revivalist-type cases of preaching. They lack the ABCs of biblical hermeneutics". Here Oak's passion is evident for the Word of God as written in the Bible, and he believes it must be rightly understood and preached. Because of his sincere interpretative commitment to a given text, he sometimes spends much time exploring the relevant meaning of the passage in the light of the text's biblical or historical context, in order to open its horizon wide enough to draw the listener's attention

under its arc. "Consequently, his audience feels drawn into an insider's perspective of the text, not remaining as spectators on the outside" (1997:71).

Although Oak elaborates the meaning of the text rather profoundly, this does not necessarily mean that his sermon remains a mere tiring lecture of elaboration. Rather, while unfolding the sermon, he continually holds the listeners' attention with a dialogic delivery mode and consecutive questions. For example, in the introduction, listeners might hesitate to consider themselves as those who have eyes to see God. However, through consecutive questions that confirm the meaning of 'to see God' in terms of faith to worship Him, Oak attempts to mould his logical elaboration into a more intimate and applicable message (*cf.* P 22: L 6-8). In respect of making the sermon more relevant and applicable to the listeners, Oak describes his endeavour as follows:

I have been trying to bridge the gap between the Bible and our lives more effectively. I strive to make my sermons easier to understand on the part of my congregation. My goal is an easy sermon, which has a faithful content. I do not try to convey beautiful words, elegant sentences, and logical information, but to deliver a dialogue-type sermon, comfortable to the ear, appealing to the heart, and reverberating in the mind over and over again (cited in Kwon 1997:88).

In these words we could possibly identify the rhetorical characteristics also of the analyzed sermon. His strong appeal to the heart of the listener is found in, for example, the fact that he volitionally appeals to the emotion of the audience, not satisfied with only an informative presentation. Sometimes he even speaks with an extremely loud voice (*cf.* P 25: L 10-11; L 21-24; P 26: L 20-21; P 28: L 21-22).

Thirdly, according to observations made by several analysers of Oak's sermons, a typical rhetorical characteristic in the latter part of the sermon is his strong appeal to the heart with a direct thrust and reprimands (*cf.* SE Lee 1995:31; Kwon 1997:77; HS Kim 1997:31). In other words, only after expounding the meaning of the passage, Oak turns his attention towards the listeners. He now concentrates on their hearts where he believes the Word should enter, persuading them to be totally exposed under the light of the Word, and to making crucial decisions according to the Word. For example, in this sermon, after explaining the meaning of 'to see God with a pure heart,' he persuades the listeners to examine their hearts in the light of the Word, whether they have a holy passion and desire to see God (*cf.* P 25: L 35-37). The same strong persuasion continues as follows: "Dear brothers and sisters! Let us humbly ponder on ourselves. Why do I become miserable? Isn't it because you don't see God? Why do we lose strength and become downcast? It is because you don't see God almighty?" (P 28: L 1ff).

In a sense, this persuasion goes beyond a gentle application. It is a strong thrust in which the listeners receive the preacher's direct reprimands, in which he appeals seemingly effectively to their hearts. SE Lee (1995:31, 36) compares Oak's direct appeal and warning to a gun that fires directly at the target. Because of this, while listening to Oak's sermons, Kwon feared "that he might drive all his congregation away from the church with his frequent and directly targeted reprimands. He roars like a lion; he thunders like a storm with lightening and torrents of rain" (Kwon 1997:77). According to Kwon (1997:78), Oak's rebukes can be found in almost every sermon. We can suggest a possible reason for his direct reprimands, based upon his view of the church. As explained in 5.2.5.1, for Oak, the congregation is Christ's disciples sent into the world in order to witness the Gospel, and they are God's chosen people. So, they need to be clearly exposed to the light of the Word in such a way as to re-establish their relationship with God, and to be nurtured and strengthened with the Word in such a way as to prepare them to be Christ's disciples and witnesses.

For these reasons, we could conclude that the rhetorical characteristics of Oak's sermon consist mainly of the following three aspects: a profound elaboration of the given biblical text, a dialogic delivery mode to connect intimately with the listener; and a strong appeal to the heart with a direct thrust. All of these reflect Oak's passion and conviction about the Word of God, the church, and the function of human preachers.

5.2.6 What role does the preacher play?

The preacher's role in Oak's sermons can be evaluated in the light of the following two aspects: his view of the church, and his devotional integrity to do his best in preaching the Word. As examined in 5.2.5.1, his view of the church plays a significant role in his proclamation of the divine presence. On the one hand, Oak proclaims a compassionate image of God, in that he regards the congregation as a gathering of God's people chosen out of the world. They existed in the vortex of a complicated situation of life and thus need God's consolation. However, Oak also holds forth another image of God, namely One who demands ethical responsibility, as He regards his people as Christ's disciples who need to be trained as His witnesses and be sent into the world.

Secondly, in the light of several rhetorical characteristics of his sermon, we observed the preacher's devotional integrity regarding his conviction of the Word of God. As clearly mentioned in the introduction to the sermon, an important role of the preacher, for him, is to proclaim the Word of God to His children in order to allow them to realize the Word of God (*cf.* P 21: L 2, 7; P 27: L 5). However, he knows that a human preacher alone cannot do this. So, he seeks the help of the Holy Spirit (P 21: L 9-10; P 24: L 35). Besides this conviction

concerning the Word and the Spirit, he is also convinced that “the church exists to nurture and to train the believers,” since the church has received the commission for it (Oak 2001:116). Thus, he insists: “if the clergy do not thoroughly teach the laity to become disciples of Christ, then, we can greatly disappoint Jesus who entrusted the church to us and requested us to ‘take care of my sheep’” (2001:116). From these observations, we could deduce that the shepherd figure, who does his best to deliver the Word and nurture the congregation, plays a significant role in Oak’s understanding of the role of the preacher.

However, this does not mean that Oak dominates over the congregation, insisting on a higher position than the congregation. Oak rather identifies himself with normal members of the congregation. Because of his frank revelation of mistakes in his life, his congregation can identify with him, their pastor, because he opens up and admits his weakness as a sinner, but who also stands before the Word of God (Kwon 1997:85; cf. P 21: L 9; P 22: L 18). In short, from Oak’s sermons, we can identify a humble shepherd who does his best to deliver the Word and nurture the congregation, Christ’s disciples, sent into the world.

5.2.7 Where is the sermon heading?

5.2.7.1 Individual effects

Thus far, we have examined the images of God found in Oak’s sermons under two headings: the consoling God, and the God who demands the believer’s ethical responsibility and rebukes the congregation for their sins. By proclaiming the consoling God, Oak reminds the congregation of the God who humbly visits them personally and warmly consoles them. As we stated earlier, five of the twelve books that were published from Oak’s preaching, also deal with the matter of suffering and the divine consolation. For example, one of his books, *There is a purpose in suffering*, has been reprinted 61 times. This proves that his message of a consoling God has made a great impression on the congregation who seeks God’s consolation.

Then, what about his emphasis on the God who demands the believer’s ethical responsibility? According to Kwon (1997:78), the listeners hear Oak’s rebukes in almost every sermon, but, at the same time, they feel strangely “being healed while being rebuked.” How can his rebukes and a more judging image of God work in healing the congregation? An answer could be found in the preacher’s image of a shepherd. In other words, since his reproofs of the congregation’s misconduct are grounded in the intimate knowledge that a shepherd has of his sheep, this rebuke provides deep healing. “His criticisms do not come cynically from an inveterate enemy nor from a biting rival, but from a loving father or a caring shepherd” (1997:78-79). Thus, Oak does not merely give a

prophet's sharp chastisement, but also a priest's soft touch of empathy. For example, in this sermon, after bitterly drawing the congregation's attention to their private matters strongly enough for them to examine them in the light of the Word of God (P 28: L 9-12), he starts to instill strength in the congregation's heart by the effective illustration of the training of a seaman (P 28: L 17-22).

Another issue that needs our attention in connection with the individual effect of Oak's sermons, is that he apparently does not enforce any specific image of God that he might prefer. He rather tries to encourage the congregation to reflect on their personal matters in the light of the Word and make their own decision in accordance with their own situations (P 28: L 8-9). For example, he admits that, as God possesses infinite attributes, we cannot know God completely. Rather, we can know and experience only one of His many attributes (P 25: L 33- P 26: L 9). Thus, after introducing various attributes, Oak encourages the audience to reflect on their own situation with the Word, and find and see God in accordance with it, by saying, "Which God do you need? Which God should you look upon? Ask yourself" (P 27: L 13-14). In this sense, we could say that his sermon is being congenial to the egalitarian view of the priesthood of all believers (*cf.* Van der Geest 1981:104).

5.2.7.2 Ecclesial effects

Based upon his view of the church, both as a gathering of God's people chosen out of the world and Christ's disciples sent into the world, Oak clearly promulgates that he does not think "God demands the audience to leave their work undone, and just attend church, Bible study group, or prayer time, looking up to heaven only" (P 21: L 27-28). From this sentence, we can deduce that he does not regard church as a kind of a resting place to enervate ecclesial consciousness for the divine commission, nor does he try to hold the believer only within the church, but reminds us that the church is a kind of nurturing school to train believers to be sent to the world as Christ's disciples. This ecclesial consciousness and sympathy for the divine commission is further enhanced by Oak's constant encouragement to his audience to seek God in their lives, expressed by his several consecutive questions (*cf.* P 27: L 13-17; P 28: L 1-12). In this sense, we could say that his sermon nurtures a healthy view of the church.

5.2.7.3 Socio-political effects

Since Oak's view of the church encompasses the believer's socio-political responsibility, we could say that his sermons also help the congregation to be socio-politically sensitive and active. In the same vein, SE Lee (1995:59-60) states that Oak's sermons rejects shallow

dualism, and encourages the congregation to realize God's sovereignty in all spheres of life. In this analyzed sermon, we can see that Oak clearly rejects superficial dualism that insists on the priority of the ministry only within the church (*cf.* P 21: L 27-33). Moreover, when Oak advises the congregation to reflect on the matter of seeing God with a pure heart, he encourages each member of the audience to reflect personally on this matter in relation to their real lives outside the church. Oak's concern for the believer's socio-political responsibility can be more clearly understood through the following sermon that deals with Christian honesty (Matt 5:33-37). I have quoted it before, but it is well worth listening to again in the context of social responsibility:

Not many people want to believe in the statistics that the Korean church produces. If the church, the so-called light of the world, is so dark, then, what will the country's future be like? I who have to preach about this fact also feel like hiding in a hole somewhere with shame. Because of these circumstances about which I can do nothing, before the gloomy reality that I cannot change by myself, I feel like running away with shame. In terms of morals, our country is in serious trouble. We all have to admit this fact. Dear brothers and sisters! What should we learn today from Jesus' lesson? What voice of revelation should we listen to? Dear brothers and sisters! Are you honest? I also ask myself "Reverend Oak, are you honest?" We all have to ask ourselves individually, how honest are we? (sermon preached on 17 Dec. 2000, my tr.; *cf.* also sermon preached on 5 Mar. 2000).

In this sermon, Oak fiercely criticizes contemporary Korean Christians who tend to tell lies easily, and firmly calls on the congregation to take up their socio-political responsibility of honesty in their concrete lives. For him, the important reason for carrying out the church's socio-political responsibility is based upon his conviction of the commission of the church to glorify God's name through the church's good deeds (Matt 5:16). With this in mind, Oak not only preaches the Word in such a way as to encourage the congregation to accomplish their social responsibility in the world, but also adds deeds to his words, by participating in extensive social relief activities (*cf.* YK Park 1998:257-267).

5.3 Conclusion

We now can draw the following two conclusions. Firstly, as examined in 5.2.5.1, Oak's ecclesiology emphasizes mainly two attributes of the church, i.e. as God's chosen people and as Christ's disciples. These are closely related to the two faces of God that he often holds forth in his sermons, i.e. the compassionate, consoling God, and the God who demands the believer's ethical responsibility and purity.

Secondly, we have shown that his burning passion for the Word and the congregation drives him to preach the Word in such a way that even his reprimands and rebukes give the

listeners a sense of healing, rather than desperation. Thus, we could say that this sermon is a recommendable example of the preacher's crucial role as shepherd of the congregational flock.

Analysis of Dong Woo Lee's sermon

4.1 Biographical profile

After the 1990s, generally speaking, the Korean church seems to be on a downward trend, and church growth has deteriorated. In spite of this, the Korean Baptist Church of Korea, where Rev Dong Woo Lee (born in 1946) has been a pastor for the past seven years (after 1994), has been on a notable upward trend in church growth in which Lee plays a crucial role.

Because of his father's unemployment and bankruptcy, Lee started to work from a young age and made a living as a tutor even during his middle school period. After completing his entrance examination for the Seoul University, Lee went abroad to study in the United States. Rev Billy Kim, in 1975, after graduating from William Tyndale College (WTC) in Canada, returned to Korea to serve the Suwon Central Baptist Church as a junior pastor. At the insistence of Rev Billy Kim, from whom Lee received ministry training, while serving this church for three years, Lee first conducted the New Life Seminar, which gave a practical and theological precept about the life of the Christian family, marriage, child rearing, and working. Through this seminar that sheds Biblical insight on the family and on life, Lee became widely known in the Korean church. For a short while, after that, Lee was appointed as the senior pastor of the Seoul Baptist Church, which is the Mother Church in the Korean Baptist denomination. While Lee served this church, the membership increased from 500 to 2000 during four years. In 1983, Lee left the church in order to further his studies in the United States. While continuing his studies at Bradenston Baptist Theological Seminary (MDiv and MA), and at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (DMin), Lee also served the Korean Baptist Church of Washington for ten years. During his ministry in this Church, the membership also increased from 500 to 2000 during the ten years. After acquiring his doctoral degree, Lee expressed his desire to return to Korea to his congregation. The Church then sought a way for Lee to continue his ministry both in America and in Korea. Their plan was that Revs Lee and MP Kim, then a senior pastor, were to take turns periodically after an assigned ministry term both in America and in Korea. The congregation of the Korean Baptist Church of Washington agreed to Lee's return to Korea with tears and loud applause. According to the plan of term ministry, Lee returned to Korea at the age of 48, and founded a church on 9 January 1994 with 344 members who gathered spontaneously because of his reputation (cf. sermon preached on 19 May 1999). After growing by 1000 members per year, the church moved into its present building in April 1996, and has now grown to one of the mega-churches in

Chapter six

Analysis of Dong Won Lee's sermon

6.1 Biographical profile

After the 1990s, generally speaking, the Korean church seems to have experienced a downward trend, and church growth has deteriorated. In spite of this general trend, Global Mission Church of Korea, where Rev Dong Won Lee (born in 1945) has been ministering for the past seven years (after 1994), has been on a totally different track, i.e. phenomenal growth in which Lee plays a crucial role.

Because of his father's unemployment and bankruptcy, Lee experienced problems in his youth and made a living as a tutor even during his middle school period. After failing the entrance examination for the Seoul University, Lee went abroad to study with the help of Rev Billy Kim. In 1975, after graduating from William Tyndale College (BTh), Lee returned to Korea to serve the Suwon Central Baptist Church as a junior pastor under the guidance of Rev Billy Kim, from whom Lee received ministry training. While serving this church for three years, Lee first conducted the New Life Seminar, which concentrated on a practical precept about the life of the Christian family, marriage, child nurturing, and working. Through this seminar that sheds Biblical insight on the whole area of Christian life, Lee became widely known in the Korean church. For a short while, at the age of 34, Lee was appointed as the senior pastor of the Seoul Baptist Church, which was called the Mother Church in the Korean Baptist denomination. While Lee served this church, the membership increased from 500 to 2000 during four years. In 1983, Lee left the church in order to further his studies in the United States. While continuing his studies at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary (MDiv and MA), and at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (DMiss), Lee also served the Korean Baptist Church of Washington for ten years. During his ministry in this Church, the membership also increased from 500 to 3000 during the ten years. After acquiring his doctoral degree, Lee expressed his desire to return to Korea to his congregation. The Church then sought a way for Lee to continue his ministry both in America and in Korea. Their plan was that Revs Lee and MP Kim, then a junior pastor, were to take turns periodically after an assigned ministry term both in America and in Korea. The congregation of the Korean Baptist Church of Washington agreed to Lee's return to Korea with tears and loud applause. According to the plan of team ministry, Lee returned to Korea at the age of 48, and founded a church on 9 January 1994 with 344 members who gathered spontaneously because of his reputation (*cf.* sermon preached on 19 May 1999). After growing by 1000 members per year, the church moved into its present building in April 1998, and has now grown to one of the mega churches in

Korea, with more than 15,000 members. In spite of the short period, Rev Lee became well known as a remarkable writer, seminar lecturer, unique church administrator, and excellent preacher (KM Lee May, 2001). In connection with the phenomenal church growth, Rev Oak said that if this church were located in the central area of Seoul instead of the present sequestered place, the memberships would have reached 60,000 persons by now (KM Lee May, 2001). However, this was exactly what Lee wanted to avoid, because of his desire to minister where there was no church at all.

6.2 Sermon analysis

Lee's preaching ministry is named as one of the most crucial reasons for the phenomenal church growth. Nobody doubts that Lee is one of the best preachers in contemporary Korea (in 2001) (YK Park 1998:232; SH Myung 1999; JS Ka 2000:751; SJ Han 2000:15; KM Lee May 2001). Because of their sermonic excellence, his sermons have been continually published in more than 100 books since 1981, widely enough to cause extensive interest among Korean Christians. And these books are sometimes reported in the Christian bestseller group as soon as they are published. Research, that Lee's Church conducted, indicates that Lee's sermons were the most important motivation for 71% of the congregation to attend the service (KM Lee May 2001). As briefly mentioned in 1.4.2.2, research that a people's daily, *Kukminilbo*, conducted asked 2000 Korean seminarians, 'Which pastor are you interested in with the proclamation of the Word of God in mind?' Lee was selected as best preacher (JS Ka 2000:751). Lee not only preaches exemplary sermons, but also teaches about preaching and his lectures on preaching have been published, titled, *Expository preaching to awaken the audience* (DW Lee 1990).

In spite of their sermonic excellence, his sermons have not been as profoundly studied as those of other Korean preachers. SJ Han (2000) interviewed Lee, and briefly introduced his sermonic contribution. While reporting on Lee's extensive ministries, KM Lee (May 2001), a free contributor to *Choson* monthly magazine, also generally mentions Lee's influential preaching. However, his sermons still require more comprehensive homiletical study. As mentioned in 1.4.2.2, in relation to the intention of our study, I have selected a sermon in which Lee paints a significant image of God to his congregation. This sermon was preached during the Christmas season of 1997, in which the congregation could have expected the delights of home and comfort but, in fact, experienced total despair and discouragement in the anxiety of the national economic crisis at the end of 1997, brought about by an IMF attack. Thus, we shall examine Lee's practical endeavour to preach about the divine presence in this specific situation. In order to maximize the analytical accuracy, his other 139 sermons, preached during the past four years, will be also referred to, when necessary.

6.2.1 Sermon outline

As mentioned earlier in 6.1, this sermon was preached to the congregation who experienced a national crisis brought on by the IMF attack on the Korean economy. With this congregational context in mind, Lee commenced this sermon by quoting William Temple's historic sermon preached to the entire England at the beginning of the Second World War (P 29: L 2-17). Quoting the introduction of this historic sermon, Lee states that now, in this critical situation, it is a time to be led by the Lord, and asks the question: 'How can we be led by God' (P 29: L 18-30). Thus the whole sermon hinges on the following three statements in answer to the abovementioned question: firstly, we have to see a vision of God; secondly, we must learn how to rely on the Word of God, and lastly, we must worship God. In a sense, this sermon appears to develop with a three-point outline. However, all these statements revolve around the central image of the wise men whom God led in a specific situation, and the answer to the question, 'How can we be led by the Lord in this critical situation?'

After asking the question, 'What should I do in order to be led by God?' Lee directly gives the first answer: 'We must look upon the Lord's vision' (P 29: L 31). Here the preacher points out that the wise men also saw a star that changed their lives, and gives a moving illustration of Florence Griffith-Joyner who, in spite of adverse circumstances, saw a vision in her life, and at last rose to become an international star (P 30: L 13-37). After raising the question of the guidance of the Lord, Lee again directly produces the second answer, that is: 'We have to learn how to rely on the Word' (P 31: L 16). In this phase, the preacher digs into the given text to explain to the congregation the historical context of how the wise men identified the star that informed them of the birth of the Messiah, and travelled to Bethlehem with only their faith in the Word of God (P 31: L 16 – P 33: L 14). After reconfirming that even in the dark of night, without a miracle, we should hold onto the Word of God, Lee gives the third answer: 'We have to become people who worship the Lord' (P 33: L 34). Here, the preacher examines the primary purpose of worship in relation to blessing as a possible result of our worship, and again introduces the wise men as an example of those who earnestly worship the Lord (P 34: L 7 – P 35: L 16). With the congregation's need for consolation and encouragement in mind, the preacher reminds them of God's blessing for those who earnestly worship Him (P 35: L 34 – P 35: L 4). Lee closes the sermon in a convincing tone with a statement that encourages the audience to look upon the Lord Jesus Christ who has come to this world to save us (P 35: L 5-15).

6.2.2 What is the initial impression of the sermon?

From this sermon, the audience may attain the following three initial impressions: a

moving and affecting sermon, excellent language and speech, and the textual integrity of the sermon. Firstly, this sermon is moving and affecting enough to encourage the audience to make a decision to look upon God, the Author of life. As mentioned in 6.1, this sermon was preached to those in despair and depression caused by the national economic crisis. Given the congregational context, this sermon, that exemplifies the wise men receiving God's guidance at a significant time, may move the audience to expect the same divine grace pertinent to their situation. The illustration of Florence Griffith-Joyner also describes a moving scene in such a way that the audience may attain hope for their miserable situation. One could say that the sermon intends to encourage the audience to look upon God and persevere in believing in His Word in their hopeless situation.

This sermon also shows the preacher's endeavour in dealing with this very popular text during the Christmas season, during which time the biblical passage about the wise men is so popular as to be continually performed in many plays. Thus, those who knew that the sermon was to be preached on this passage might have guessed the possible content of the sermon even before the sermon commenced. However, this sermon explores the identity of the wise men further by quoting from Daniel chapter 2, and reveals the historical background of the wise men and why they decided to journey to Jerusalem (P 31: L 17- P 32: L 23). Through this creative exposition, the preacher sheds new light on the given text.

Thirdly, this sermon can be evaluated homiletically in connection with its textual integrity. The wise men's worship of the newborn Messiah in Matthew 2:1-12 is a well-known passage for the Christmas season. This passage describes the opposite reactions of king Herod, hostile to the Messiah, and the wise men, passionate in worshipping Him, through which Matthew tries to draw the reader's attention to the newborn Jesus Himself. When reading the passage with this in mind, Lee's sermon that focuses symbolically on how the wise men came to receive divine guidance may raise doubts about the textual integrity of the sermon. However, a more comprehensive evaluation needs to be made in relation to other sermonic variables, such as the preacher's view of the audience, or the congregational situation. Before we attend to that, we focus on the God imagery in the sermon.

6.2.3 What kind of God does the preacher witness to in the sermon?

Generally speaking, the images of God that Lee implements in the sermon do not revolve around only one attribute of God. He rather tends to present more comprehensive images of God in an evangelical perspective, such as the compassionate, consoling God, the God who trains His people with divine purpose, and the God who demands believers' repentance of sin and ethical responsibility, all of which are presented in perspective in the Scriptures.

Firstly, he focuses on the consoling, encouraging God. For example, in the first part of the sermon, Lee speaks of a God who grants a vision to the desperate, and he encourages them to see the vision with hope (P 29: L 31 – P 31: L 15). Lee proclaims the God who “hangs a star in the sky for His children’s sake. This is the God who gives us vision, and who is pleased for His children’s sake, when they see the bright vision and dream and run their paths in life” (P 31: L 8-9). Through the moving illustration about Florence Griffith-Joyner, Lee also paints the same encouraging image of God effectively enough to engage the interest of those who are desperate and frustrated (P 30: L 13ff). When referring to other sermons, we identify a similar pattern of a God who encourages those who experience despair and frustration. For example, in the sermon preached on Jesus’ healing of a woman who had been suffered bleeding for 12 years (Mark 5:25-43), Lee emphatically points towards the Lord who is present in our suffering:

Brothers and sisters, ‘power had gone out from Him’ means Jesus has given up his power. Here is the cross. In order to make us rich, the Lord vacates His power. In order to give us life, He is crucified. After passing the suffering of the cross, the Lord now waits for us today in order to heal us. Because of our suffering He suffers too, with us. When children suffer, parents cannot but suffer too. Suffering because of our suffering and bearing our cross, He calls those who are suffering: ‘Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened’ (sermon of 9 Aug. 1998, my tr.; cf. also sermon of 16 Aug. 1998).

Bearing in mind those audiences who are in despair, Lee preaches about the consoling, encouraging God, in the hope that they may encounter God’s grace and compassion in their situation. In regard to the consoling face of God, we must pay attention to an important link in the relationship between God and the believer. As clearly mentioned in the sermon examined in our study, one of the links that describes the God-human relationship, is the dream and vision that the believer has to hold onto while experiencing difficulties and suffering. For him or her, to see a vision in difficulty and hardship is more important than the obvious theory of how to improve the economy (P 31: L 3-4). The same emphasis can be found easily in other sermons preached on 5, 19 and 26 July 1998; 23 August, 27 September, and 6 December 1998; 25 April 1999; 9 January 2000; 7 and 14 January 2001; 18 and 25 February, 11 and 25 March, and 10 June 2001. In all of these sermons, Lee emphasizes the importance of seeing a vision and dream in difficulties and suffering in relation to God’s plan, and encourages the audience to hold onto the dream and vision despite present problems. According to KM Lee, “vision seems the most used term in the Global Mission Church” where Lee has been ministering, and it is said that an important reason why the church has enjoyed such phenomenal growth is as a result of a clear vision presentation (KM Lee May 2001). This vision and dream is not necessarily confined to individual success and health, which can overcome the present physical economic failure.

Lee's emphasis on the importance of looking upon the vision and dream does not mean that the audience should envisage individual success and health - as a later part of his sermon makes clear (*cf.* P 35: L 17-33). While encouraging the audience to see the vision and hold onto the dream, Lee rather produces an alternative image that explains how to overcome present difficulties victoriously with God's guidance. This alternative image is effective enough to encourage the congregation to follow the path that this image directs. A more detailed examination of how Lee presents effective alternative images will be dealt with further in relation to the rhetorical characteristics of his sermon (6.2.5.2).

Another important image of God found in Lee's sermons are the image of the God who trains His people with good purpose, even in suffering. Although this image of God does not appear explicitly in the sermon examined in our study, we can identify his thoughts on this from his view of suffering. For him, "if we become a nation that bows down before the Lord and worship Him, He will surely lead us into a new future" (P 36: L 7-8). Here Lee tries to find the positive side of suffering, which trains the believer into a desirable attitude. With this positive perspective on suffering, Lee encourages his audience to overcome this national crisis in such a way as to find the will of God and bring about another period of revival in Korea (*cf.* sermon of 19 July 1998). The same image of a God who trains His people with suffering can be easily identified in the following sermon preached on Jesus' calming of the storm (Mk 4:35-41):

Dearly beloved, the first part of today's passage reads: 'That day when evening came, he [Jesus] said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side."' Who suggests this voyage? It is Jesus. If so, then doesn't He have a plan? It is He who suggests going over the sea. Then, the wind and waves are also within the plan of God. This Person suggested the voyage to us, and being present in the wind and waves, if this Person planned the voyage, then the wind and waves are also part of God's plan. There is meaning in suffering. God's will is in the wind and waves. When the Lord is with us, we can achieve victory. Even the wind and waves bring us a plus (sermon of 26 Jul. 1998, my tr).

The same face of God can be found in other sermons preached on 28 December 1997; 26 July, 16 August and 8 November 1998; 21 February, 3 and 24 October 1999; 27 August, 12 November and 31 December 2000; 14 January, 4 March and 8 April 2001. Lee emphasizes the image of God who trains His people by means of some difficulty and suffering, because this interpretation seems to be relevant to those audiences who experience difficulties and frustration.

In addition to this consoling and training God, like other Korean evangelical preachers, Lee also preaches on other important biblical images of God, which are rather contrary to the compassionate image of God, for example, the God who firmly asks for repentance of sin

or obedience to the Word. For instance, in the following sermon preached about John the Baptist's death (Mk 6:14-29):

Dearly beloved, I hope you believe in the precious blood of the Lord. This precious blood that He shed on the cross will set us free from a conflict of the conscience. The Lord will forgive us. It is time for this nation and the whole world to turn back to the cross. Let me first have my conscience restored in me. While living in the world, despite being children of God, our conscience may become so easily tarnished. Today let's kneel down before the cross, and repent before the almighty God. Lie down before the living God, before the God whose eyes penetrate me, who examines my conscience, who looks at the stains in my life. Repent before Him. I hope you will experience God's help and forgiveness. The precious blood will run like a river. You will receive freedom of your conscience. May all of you experience this wonderful power of God at this time (sermon of 20 Sept 1998, my tr.).

The same image of God who asks for repentance of sin can be found in his next sermons about the seven deadly sins of arrogance (11 Jul 1999), jealousy (18 Jul), anger (25 Jul), greed (1 Aug), voracity (8 Aug), laziness (15 Aug), and lust (22 Aug). In addition to these consecutive sermons about the seven deadly sins, he also preached about the sin of atheism (29 Aug 1999), the sin of self-maltreatment (12 Aug), the sin of falsehood (19 Aug), the sin not to love your neighbour (26 Aug).

In summary, the dominant faces of God that Lee prefers to emphasize in his sermons are mainly the following three: the compassionate, consoling God; the God who trains His people with good purpose and encourages them to overcome present difficulties and suffering by focusing upon the dream and vision; and the God who wants repentance of sin and ethical responsibility.

6.2.4 How does the preacher deal with the Scriptures?

An important element in Lee's sermons is his inductive expository method in which he tries to connect text and context. Our study of how Lee deals with the Scriptures in his sermon will revolve around the following two concerns: his homiletical view of expository preaching; and the textual integrity of the sermon, in which the preacher interprets the given text in such a way as to reveal the main message of the text.

Our first interpretative concern is about his homiletical view on expository preaching, since this is not only what he suggests as one of the best sermonic ways to encompass both the Word of God and the audience, but also what other people refer to when they mention Lee's sermons. It would be an exaggeration to say that it was Lee who first introduced expository preaching to the Korean church (*cf.* 2.2.4). However, he is undoubtedly one of the preachers

best known for expository preaching in the contemporary Korean church (SM Lee Apr 1999; KM Lee May 2001; Myung 1999). SM Lee, a reporter of the *Chosun* daily newspaper, regards Lee's style of expository preaching as an important reason for his successful ministry. In this news article of 16 Apr 1999 Rev SM Lee evaluates his expository sermons as follows: "A deductive approach that settles the subject beforehand, and then searches for its foundation from the Scriptures cannot but lose the original meaning of the Scriptures. Instead, I emphasize – like Lee – an inductive approach to ensure a thorough reading of the Scripture itself." KM Lee (May 2001, my tr.) also describes Lee's expository preaching as follows:

While reading the relevant biblical passages together with the audience, Rev Lee preached the sermon with the intention to examine the key point of the passages. Instead of making a unilateral speech to the audience, he induced the audience to keep their eyes on the Scripture as though on a textbook. He examined some important passages word by word, and in a unique way he deployed the sermon by following the textual order so faithfully.

In his book, *Expository preaching to awaken the audience*, DW Lee – our preacher under discussion – further describes this view on expository preaching, and deals with its homiletical merits and demerits, as other homiletical textbooks do. According to him, the following five elements are necessary components for expository preaching: "Firstly, there should be the biblical text. Secondly, the original meaning of the text should be explicated. Thirdly, the universal truth revealed in the text should be proclaimed. Fourthly, the text's truth should be organized and explicated and centered around one theme. Fifthly, the subject of the sermon should be explicated so as to be applied to the life of the audience" (1990:105). As implied here, the important elements of expository preaching are the biblical foundation of the main message of the sermon, its thematic unity inside the sermon, and the practical application of the biblical message.

In Lee's sermons, we can easily identify his endeavour to draw the main outline of the sermon from the given passage, and to arrange these outlines effectively in such a way that the sermon has unity. For example, in his sermon about Jesus' ministry in his hometown, Nazareth (Mk 6:1-6), while strictly following the literary order of the given passage, Lee explicates the following three reasons for Jesus not performing any miracles: "Firstly, it was because people of Nazareth did not seek more than just satisfaction of curiosity (drawn from v.2); Secondly, it was because they did not overcome prejudice (v.3), and lastly, it was because they did not believe in Him (vv.5-6)" (sermon on 23 Aug 1998). A similar expository style can be identified in other sermons (*cf.* on 7 Dec 1997, 17 May, 16 Aug, 13 Sep, and 15 Nov 1998). From these sermons, we can identify Lee's intention to interpret the

given text without fail, to draw the main outline of the sermon from the given passage in such a way as to keep the audience's eyes on the biblical text, and to develop these outlines in unity - exactly as he emphasizes in his homiletical textbook.

However, this homiletical principle of expository preaching does not appear to control his every sermon, because the sermon examined in our study shows different aspects of expository preaching. This sermon consists of the three outlines explaining how to be led by God; "we have to look upon the Lord's vision; we have to learn how to rely on the Word of the Lord; and lastly, we have to become people who worship the Lord." Here, we may ask whether the given passage directs and supports these three outlines, or whether the preacher's presupposition about the message influenced his sermon structure. More importantly, we should ask whether other, more integral rhetorical considerations should not play a larger role in Lee's sermons. For example, in the well-known narrative plot of Matthew 2:1-12, we may pay attention to the contrasting reactions of Herod and the magi to the newborn Messiah, and rather preach in the following trend: "The presence of the messianic king demands decision and therefore causes division between those who accept and those who reject him" (cf. Hagner 1993:32). Or, the wise men might be interpreted in such a way as to symbolize the Gentiles who, unlike the Jews, prove to be receptive to the Messiah and God's purpose with Him. To be fair, it should be stated that Lee's sermon does pay attention to the main scope of the biblical text, and is sensitive for the linguistic plot, as Lee develops the sermon towards a climax when he presents the wise men as those who worship the newborn King, the hope of history and of mankind (P 34: L 22ff). However, because Lee presents the wise men from the outset as exemplary figures who received divine guidance, this sermon does not seem to succeed in placing the newborn Jesus in the centre. It could be asked whether Lee's emphasis on the newborn Jesus at the end of the sermon does not come too late to influence the main thrust of his message (P 36: L 10-14). We now focus on the preacher's view of the audience and rhetorical strategies implemented to respond to the congregational need.

6.2.5 How is the preacher's relationship with the audience?

6.2.5.1 His view of the audience

DW Lee's view of the audience can be examined in the light of the following two aspects: the needs of the audience, which should be taken into account when preaching, and their emotional and volitional dispositions as human beings, which must be considered to produce a decision-making process. In his book, *Expository preaching to awaken the audience*, Lee (1990:167; my tr.) describes his view of the audience as follows:

If the preacher overrates the audience, he/she becomes afraid of or flatters them, and it ends in a kind of idolization of the audience. On the contrary, if the preacher underrates them, he/she tends to degrade the audience to the extent of manipulating them for his/her message. A biblical recognition of the audience is ministering to them. When we, as preachers, recognize the audience, it is most important to recognize the need that they feel.

Lee (1990:167ff) says that one of the reasons why contemporary preaching does not bring about change is its failure to deal with the audience's heart-felt needs. Thus, he emphasizes that one of the most important views of the audience is recognizing what these needs are. Bearing this in mind, Lee even mentions Abraham Maslow's seven steps in the hierarchy of needs. Lee's interest in the needs of the audience does not necessarily mean that he preaches in such a way as to meet only the temporal needs of the audience. Rather, throughout the whole sermon, he tries to encourage the audience to turn from their temporal interest to God's eternal truth (cf. P 35: L 17ff). Here, we need to note Lee's sermonic attention to the audience, especially those who have some specific needs, and his rhetorical strategy to seek points of contact with the audience by his consideration of their needs. We will return to the issue of rhetorical strategy in the next section.

Another point that needs attention, as regards his view of the audience, is the emotional dimension of human beings, which is closely related to volition. Lee links on to Aristotle's three ways to approach an audience: *logos*, *pathos*, and *ethos* (cf. Larsen 1992:35; C Miller 1994:147; PS Wilson 1995:78; Pelikan 2001:10). In Lee's view, a human being has three dimensions, namely cognitive, affective, and volitional, and in accordance, the sermon should not only deliver an informative message, but also touch the affective dimension in such a way as to encourage the decision-making process. Because Lee has a more holistic view of the audience, he does not seem to be satisfied with info-sermons that focus only on a cognitive delivery of a message. Rather, he tries to touch the audience's emotional dimension, and to ignite the decision-making process. This he does by using certain rhetorical devices.

6.2.5.2 Rhetorical characteristics of the sermon

Lee's sermons also arouse people's interest because one of its most remarkable aspects is his excellence in language and speech. According to Park, his language and sermons are powerful and influential enough to be compared to those of Harry Fosdick, who was a sensation in the American church during the 1920s (YK Park 1998:232). Rev HJ Kim, a junior pastor of the church, evaluates Lee's sermon as follows; "He has an excellent command of speech, and uses such good words and high class sentences that his sermon may be directly published without any revision" (KM Lee May 2001). The rhetorical

characteristics of his sermon may be divided into the following four aspects: the sermon's inductive mode in the introduction, in which the preacher establishes a point of contact with the audience's heart-felt needs; humour and a dialogic question to touch the audience's heart; a moving illustration to encourage a decision-making process; and the rhetorical endeavours to point towards the divine presence.

The first rhetorical characteristic is evident in his view on the important function of the introduction to the sermon, which must arouse the audience's interest and establish a close point of contact with them. The following interview illustrates Lee's way of deploying the introduction:

Reporter: I once listened to your homiletics lecture, and you were saying, "You will fail if you do not capture the audience during the first five minutes". What is your secret to capture the audience during the first five minutes? In other words, how do you construct the introductory part?

Rev. Lee: During the revival periods, the audience was ready for the Word with an ardent mind. So, the preacher did not need to be concerned about the introduction. However, since it is not the revival period now, if it were not for the contact point in the introduction, the audience would lose interest in the whole sermon. Ilion T Jones says; "The weakest point of the contemporary sermon is the introduction and conclusion, and a failure in introduction means the failure of the whole sermon." The introduction started in a superficial way cannot arouse the audience's interest. So I approach the introduction in an inductive way. Isn't it the inductive approach that arouses the interest of the audience by analogizing the general principle from a concrete situation? (SJ Han 2000:16-17; *cf.* also Lee 1990:131,209).

Because Lee regards failure in the introduction as failure of the whole sermon, he seeks, from the outset, an effective rhetorical strategy for his sermonic goal (*cf.* Jones 1958; also Van der Geest 1981:125; Runia 1983:61; Brueggemann 1989:51; C Miller 1994:19,26,49). He found an answer in the inductive approach that starts from the concrete real-life situation relevant to the Gospel, and traces back to the Scriptures to acquire a biblical light on it. Through an inductive approach at the introductory part of the sermon, which touches the audience's heart-felt needs and concrete situation, Lee tries to capture the audience's interest from the outset. For example, in this analyzed sermon, bearing Korea's economic crisis in mind, Lee quotes the historic sermon of William Temple at the beginning of the Second World War in such a way as to help the audience to find a possible answer in their similar situation of despair and depression (P 29: L 2-17). Lee's consideration of the congregational context and needs is found not only in the introduction, but indeed throughout the sermon. For example, through Lee's attempts to remedy the congregation's distorted expectation of a miracle and economic blessing, we could detect his sharp sensing

of their heart-felt need for such a miracle and blessing, but also their deeper, real need. Therefore, he does not appease the congregation; he rather tries to remedy their distorted expectation, and encourages the audience to transform their parochial perspective of divine providence by emphasizing the importance of the Word itself and worshipping God, rather than seeking worldly blessings (*cf.* P 33: L 23ff, P 35: L 17ff).

The second rhetorical strategy is his use of humour and dialogic questions that make the sermon warmer and more intimate. According to KM Lee, in many of his sermons Rev Lee makes several jokes and gives illustrations that make the delivery mode of the sermon more informal and intimate from the audience's point of view (Lee May 2000). In this sermon too, there are two jokes that serve this purpose (*cf.* P 29: L 7-8; P 34: L4-5). Concerning the dialogic questions, Lee (1990:203) rightly emphasizes: "The preacher has to ask a question in advance, not from the preacher's view, but from the view of those who listen to his/her sermon." In this sermon too, there are several questions put in an attempt to draw the audience into the sermon (*cf.* P 34: L 14; P 35: L 17). Upon hearing these jokes, and following the dialogic questions, the audience will enjoy the preacher's warm, personal delivery, and so perhaps joyfully accept what the preacher presents for their decision-making process.

The third rhetorical strategy is an illustration that moves the audience to such an extent that they might make a decision. As mentioned before (6.2.5.1), Lee takes into consideration the emotional and volitional dimensions of the audience. In his view, "knowledge may be considered as an important component in communicating with the audience; however, because the emotional dimension is dominant in human beings, the sermon should arouse affection." (1990:203) Thus, he tries to reach this sermonic goal through effective rhetorical measures, such as moving illustrations and affective imaginary descriptions. For example, in this sermon, an illustration about Florence Griffith-Joyner (who, in spite of adverse circumstances, held onto the encouraging vision in her life and, at last, rose to become an international star) exerts its rhetorical influence in such a way as to encourage the audience who might experience the same desperate, frustrating situation (P 30: L 13-37). Because of this affective element in Lee's sermons, audiences state that "there are tears and laughter in his sermon" (SJ Han 2000:18).

The rhetorical function of the illustration is also to present an alternative imagery or world, in which the audience may acquire the motivation for obedience and change. In this sermon, the illustration about Florence and the dominant image of the wise men are presented in such a way as to suggest an alternative world in which the audience may find a possible answer to their miserable situation. In other sermons, there are further examples (*cf.*

sermons on 31 May, 7 June, 13 Sep and 19 Jul of 1998; 10 Sep 2000; 15 Jul 2001, etc). For example, in his consecutive expository preaching on the Gospel of Mark, entitled “Evangelist’s preparation,” when he preached about the 12 disciples sent out by Jesus (Mk 6:7-13), Lee closes the sermon with an affective illustration about Wallace Hartly who, on the deck of the Titanic played the hymn, “Nearer my God to Thee” for the last time as the ship sank (sermon on 13 Sep 1998). Instead of a logical explanation or imperative proclamation, through these moving illustrations that present desirable alternative images and an imaginary world, Lee tries to encourage the audience indirectly to be willing to make a decision about what he preaches.

Lastly, what needs our attention in connection with the rhetorical strategies in Lee’s sermon is the possible influence of the positive and intimate delivery mode upon his proclamation of the divine presence. Generally speaking, God-images in Lee’s sermon are similar to those of other Korean preachers. However, when we compare the image of God (who asks for the believer’s repentance of sin and ethical responsibility) as spelled out in Lee’s sermon with that of other Korean preachers, we recognize that, in Lee’s sermon, the same image of God is presented in a gentler, more tender and more indirect mode. For example, in Lee’s sermon, the God who wants repentance of sins is not as adamant and intensive as the God in Oak’s sermon. Why is this? An answer could be found in the rhetorical devices which Lee implement. As pointed out above, the delivery mode of Lee’s sermon is humorous and intimate to the extent that even strong images of God are moulded in a rather warm and joyful mode. In addition, although Lee also presents the divine summons asking for repentance of sin, he often closes a burdensome message with a more encouraging illustration that portrays an alternative image. For example, in the sermon on the suffering of those who follow Jesus (Mk 10:35-45), after unfolding the sermon with three outlines on the resolution to give up worldly glory, to serve, and to suffer, he closes the sermon with the moving illustration of Rev GC Choo who, helped by the Holy Spirit, died a martyr’s death during the Japanese persecution (sermon on 14 Feb 1999). By closing the sermon with an illustration that opens a possible alternative world, the burdensome image of God, who calls the audience to suffer for the Gospel, seems not to bring a mental burden to the audience, but rather encourages them to move forward.

To summarize: in Lee’s sermon we can identify the following three rhetorical strategies that correspond with his view on the audience and communication variables: an inductive approach in the sermon’s introduction, in which the preacher tries to capture the audience’s attention; humour and dialogic questions to open the audience’s heart; and a moving illustration to present an alternative imaginary world that helps the audience to be obedient to the preached message.

6.2.6 What role does the preacher play?

Regarding the preacher's role in Lee's sermons, we must examine the following two aspects; his homiletical view of a preacher, and the rhetorical function of speech and personality in the act of preaching. Firstly, let us examine Lee's homiletical thought on the preacher's function in preaching. In his book, Lee (1990:9,149-153,175) describes the preacher as one who experiences the tension brought about by the conflict between the contemporary and the Scriptural contexts. With this tension in mind, Lee compares the preacher with a ferry that carries the Word received from God to the contemporary audience. Moreover, Lee (1990:153ff) describes the function of the preacher in analogy with the harmonious threefold functions of Christ: king, prophet, and priest. In the light of the preacher's prophetic function, Lee rightly points out that the preacher should not fail to preach about repentance and righteousness, but, in the light of the priestly function, also peace and atonement; and, taken together, he suggests that the sermon should harmoniously involve all these elements. In terms of the kingly function he emphasizes the need to preach the message in such a way as to set a communal goal for the church, and to lead the members toward it.

Secondly, some practical aspects concerning the preacher's role can be found in the rhetorical strategies embodied in his speech. As examined in 6.2.5.2, in comparison to the other preachers such as YS Park or HH Oak, Lee's imaging of God, even the God who wants repentance of sin or the believer's ethical response, is done in a gentler, more moderate mode. We identified some of the variables from Lee's rhetorical strategies that focus on a positive mode of delivery with an inductive approach: jokes, dialogic questions, and moving illustrations. A clearer understanding of the sermonic function of the preacher's personality and rhetorical strategies in proclaiming the divine presence will be acquired through a more detailed comparative study of the preachers in the next chapter.

6.2.7 Where is the sermon heading?

6.2.7.1 Individual effects

According to Lee (1990:211-14), the concluding section of a sermon should seek a change of volition with individual application. From this suggestion of his, we can deduce some of his possible intentions regarding the individual effects of the sermon, also the one under question. The first significant effect concerns an individual application. In this sermon, Lee says, "Brothers and sisters, what do you feel when you hear this word? What do you become most interested in? For example, some businessman may reply 'to worship God.' However, frankly speaking, this kind of answer is abnormal" (P 33: L 35-7). By introducing

a practical and detailed way to apply what he preaches, Lee encourages the audience to reflect on their own context in the light of the preached message.

In addition to this individual application, Lee also suggests that the sermon, especially the concluding part, should bring about decision-making or a change of volition. In connection with this change, Rev HJ Kim, a junior pastor of the church, states, “Lee is excellent in driving the cognitive content to the emotional volition” (KM Lee May 2001). By means of dialogical questions and moving illustrations, Lee develops the sermon in such a way as to induce the audience into volition, pertinent to their own personal context. Also in this sermon, Lee firmly says to those who are frustrated and desperate as a result of the economic crisis, “If our nation is only concerned about the recovery of economy, then God will never bless our nation. The recovery of the economy cannot be the ultimate goal of our nation” (P 35: L 19-20). Through these concluding statements, Lee firmly cuts out the audience’s superficial expectation of economic blessings and miracles, and urges them to turn their eyes to God and to worship Him only (P 35: L 25-33). For these reasons, we could conclude that Lee’s sermon is effective enough to bring about a change of volition, and to encourage the audience, individually, to apply the message.

6.2.7.2 Ecclesial effects

In this sermon, Lee mentions the importance of worshipping God, which offers us a starting point for examining the sermon’s ecclesial effects. He emphasizes thus: “In order to experience the guidance of God, we have to become people who worship the Lord” (P 33: L 34). In this statement, we can assume that the church is considered as a worshipping community where people learn how to worship God communally, and come to experience Him. Through the sermon, Lee tries to nurture the ecclesial community where people of God gather from out of the world, worship Him together with solidarity of spirit, and witness about the Lord, whom they experience, to the world. Similar examples, where Lee tries to nurture a desirable church through his proclaimed message are clearly evident in other sermons:

After attending the service, some people just depart. There is neither meeting nor fellowship. Do you think this church could change the world? But the church that the Lord wants is a real community, where people share the joy and sadness of life together, share the delight and difficulty of life together. A community that shares the deep wounds of failure together, consoles together, and encourages together! Inside the church we may meet those whom we don’t like. However while accepting them, we come to learn how to forgive. So we become a forgiving and loving community, and proclaim thus to the world, ‘Don’t you also need this love?’ It is through this community that God wants to change the world (sermon on 13 Sep 1998).

In conclusion, we could say that, with his evangelical view of the church, Lee preaches in such a way that the audience may respond communally to the preached message and become anew God's witness of unity to the world.

6.2.7.3 Socio-political effects

As regards the socio-political effect of the sermon, we could say that Lee provides a sermon that encompasses the believer's socio-political responsibility. His statement about economic recovery could be representative:

There is no higher dream than that of the nation bowing down before the living God, adoring this God, the dream of a humble nation serving Him and all nations throughout the world, a nation with greater wealth who helps the neighboring nations in a humble spirit. Then, the recovery of the economy will not be an in itself. If not, God surely won't bless us (P 35: L 27-30).

Here it is evident that Lee not only bears the believer's socio-political responsibility in mind, but also interprets socio-political matters in the light of the God who is the Author of history. With this comprehensive view of the believer's socio-political responsibility, Lee rightly emphasizes that worshipping God should be considered, not as a time to forget real life, but as a time of suffering and thanksgiving to find the answer to life's questions (Lee 1990:165; *cf.* also sermon on 12 July 1998). Although Lee aims to guide the audience to find practical, relevant answers to socio-political issues in a congregational context, this does not necessarily mean that, through his sermon, he tries to compel the audience to accept one specific suggestion. Rather, he offers biblical light on impending socio-political matters (KM Lee May 2001; *cf.* 165:10). It is the audience's duty to reflect on their practical socio-political roles in the light of the preached message, and to make real decisions about them.

6.3 Conclusion

We can now draw the following two conclusions about Lee's sermon, concerning: the inductive approach, especially in the delivery of the sermon; and the sermonic importance of the moving illustrations, which he implements in order to motivate the audience's volition. Firstly, as examined in 6.2.5.2, Lee's emphasis on an inductive approach in the delivery of the message makes the sermon more pertinent and applicable to the audience. Thus, when we think about his role as witness of the presence of God, Lee's sermon presents more intimate, comforting faces of God, because these images of God take into account the audience's impending, heart-felt needs. Even when Lee tries to remedy the audience's distorted perspective of God and His guidance, he continually pays attention to

the congregational needs and inductively approaches pressing issues (cf. 35: L 17-8). Therefore, the images of God are held forth to the audience in a more intimate and relevant fashion.

In addition to the inductive approach in Lee's sermon, his warm personality and rhetorical strategies, that include his gentle, moving mode of delivery, also play a significant role in his preaching. Instead of forcing issues, or a continuous imperative mode, Lee effectively preaches in a joyful, moving mode, in such a way that the audience could willingly make a decision to follow what the preacher presents. Also characteristic is his use of moving illustrations that indirectly presents the audience with an alternative world and indicates a possible way to be obedient to the preached Word. According to Hauerwas, "We can only act within a world we can see. Thus, vision is the necessary prerequisite for ethics." With this in mind, Hauerwas (1989:84) understands that "the Beatitudes are not a strategy for achieving a better society; they are an indication, a picture that introduces a new society." In the same vein, Brueggemann (1989:88) insists: "Preaching about obedience concerns a transformed imagination." From the use of illustrations and the rhetorical delivery mode in Lee's sermon, we can once again confirm the homiletical importance of an imaginative presentation that dynamically indicates a transformational possibility for obedience to the Word, beyond our present enervated capacity for action. A more detailed study on this aspect will be presented later.

Chapter seven

A comparative evaluation of the five examined sermons

Thus far, we have examined five representative Korean preachers and their sermons, asking the question: How do they proclaim the divine presence? We evaluated their homiletical methodology related to the four sermonic components: God, the Scriptures, the preacher, and the congregation. Although the issue of the divine presence cannot be considered as the only purpose of their sermons, each sermon revealed remarkable characteristics regarding this subject. In order to reveal these homiletical characteristics more clearly, we shall do a comparative evaluation of the five sermons, following the same pattern of questions we put to the sermons individually. By means of these comparative studies, we shall clarify the merits and demerits of the sermons in order to direct the normative and strategic study further, in accordance with the four phases of practical theological study: the descriptive, explanatory, normative, and strategic phases.

7.1 What images of God do we see in the preacher's sermons?

The following comparative study on God-images reveals the fact that limited human preachers can present only a partial face of God in their sermons, according to their specific personal experience of God or theological, pastoral emphasis within a specific congregational context, or with some specific pastoral purpose in mind, whether negative or positive. While admitting the limited nature of God-images in sermons, we can examine the underlying causes that lead a preacher to emphasize certain God-images in each sermon, and diagnose and further evaluate the homiletical relationship between these images and the underlying causes. Thus a guiding question for this examination will be: What images of God are emphasized in comparison to the other preachers, and what is the motivating cause for emphasizing these specific God-images in each case?

Firstly, the God-images that Park utilises in his sermon centre around mainly God's sovereignty and glory in relation to the believer's holiness before God. Thus, one of the dominant faces of God, which is emphasized in the major portion of his sermon, is the God who is pleased and glorified by the believer's holiness and sincerity, and who will judge all according to what they have done in the world (*cf.* 2.2.3.3). We have identified Park's possible reason for emphasizing this face of God from his view on preaching and the function of a preacher. In comparison to other preachers, God-images in Park's approach are firmly based upon his highly theological view of God's Word and the preacher's responsibility to preach it. For Park, preaching is the crucial moment when God comes and speaks to His people, directing the hearer's decisions of life and death. In addition, Park

understands the preachers' role as standing before God rather than before men, and being responsible to deliver the authentic Word of God without compromise, as God has sent him/her (2.2.3.1). With these highly theological views of preaching and because he believes that preachers must deliver the authentic Word with a consciousness of 'Coram Deo,' Park proclaims the sovereignty and glory of God with ethical emphasis.

However, when we turn to the God-images in Cho's sermon, we can identify another aspect of the homiletical relationship between God-images and the preacher's motivation to witness specific images. As examined in 3.2.3, salient images of God in Cho's sermon revolve around the almighty and beneficent God. We identified Cho's underlying reason for emphasizing these positive images of an almighty and beneficent God from his view of the congregation (3.2.5.1) and his theological perspective on a divine blessing for the believer (3.2.6). In comparison to other preachers, God-images in Cho's witness are closely related to the preacher's concern for the congregational context and heart-felt needs. For Cho, the congregation comprises those who are tired of the hardships of life, such as poverty, failure, illness, and anguish, and thus need to be consoled with God's positive faces, in view of a better future.

However, these dynamic and positive images of God become enervated as this almighty, beneficent face of God is sometimes preached in relation to human beings' free will, which draws the divine grace into the human sphere. Thus, we pointed out that God-images in Cho's sermon tend to fall into the following four categories: God almighty, God beneficent, God incapable, and God subservient, all of which are partial, mainly applied for the congregational preference (3.3).

Thirdly, one of the God-images in Kwak's sermon centres on the Author of history, and "the divine dispensation" has been suggested as being the dominant factor in describing the God-human relationships in his sermon. With this image of God in mind, Kwak prefers to preach on the subjects of pilgrimage, silence in obedience and suffering, all of which are interpreted as happening under the dispensation of God, the Author of history. We identified Kwak's underlying motivation for emphasizing these profound theological themes from his sensitivity to the eschatological perspective of history. Since Kwak tries to interpret what happens in the world in the light of an eschatological consciousness, the audiences who listen to his sermon may encounter the God who, as the Author of history, rules history in the present dispensation, en route to the new and ultimate one. In this sense, Kwak's sermon offers a good homiletical example of the relationship between a preacher's consciousness of eschatology, and his or her usage of specific God-images in the sermon.

Fourthly, the dominant images of God in Oak's sermon mainly centre on the following

three faces: Jesus Christ as the Saviour of all, the consoling God who has compassion and mercy for His children, and the God who wants ethical commitment and responsibility in accordance with His holy name. In connection with the underlying motivation for stressing these images of God, we examined Oak's ecclesiology, in which he emphasises two attributes of the church, i.e. God's chosen people and Christ's disciples. We also deduced that the former relates to the consoling God, and the latter to the God who wants the believer's purity. We identified this underlying ecclesiology as being one of his motivations to emphasize certain faces of God, i.e. the consoling God and the God who wants ethical commitment (5.2.5.1).

Fifthly, in the case of Lee's sermon, we confirmed that images of God revolve around the following three factors: the compassionate, consoling God; the God who trains His people with good purpose, and encourages them to overcome present difficulties and suffering while focusing on the dream and vision; and the God who wants repentance of sins and ethical responsibility. However, when we compare these faces of God with those of other preachers, as examined in 6.2.5.2, we encounter a more intimate, warm image of God, even in the case of the God who demands ethical obedience. We identified the reason for this from the rhetorical characteristics of Lee's sermons, which have an intimate, encouraging, and even humorous atmosphere to the extent that hard images of God are presented in a rather warm, joyful mode. From Lee's sermon we could identify the relationship between his intimate, warm delivery mode and his communication of images of God's encouraging and warm face to the audience.

As examined thus far, images of God in each preacher's sermon imply the preacher's unique interest and intention. The sovereignty and glory of God in Park's sermon reveal his sermonic purpose of fulfilling his preaching mission to deliver the Word of God without compromise. The almighty, beneficent face of God in Cho's sermon reveals another sermonic variable, i.e. the congregational needs. Kwak's emphasis on the Author of history and divine dispensation implies his eschatological consciousness. In Oak's sermon, the consoling God and the image of God who desires the believer's ethical responsibility reveals his specific ecclesiological perspective. And lastly, the evangelical image of God in Lee's sermon expresses his intimate and informal mode when communicating with the congregation. From these comparisons, we can begin to identify what causes preachers to emphasize certain images of God in each sermon. The preacher's theological perspective for utilising God-images could be summarized as follows: preaching and the Word of God (Park), history under divine providence (Kwak), the role of the church (Oak). From Cho, Oak, and Lee's sermons we recognize the importance of the preacher's homiletical perspective on the congregational needs (Cho), the congregation's two natures (Oak), and

the rhetorical strategy to meet the congregational preference (Lee).

7.2 How do the preachers deal with the Scriptures?

As images of God in the sermons reveal the preachers' theological interests, their interpretative foci in dealing with the Scriptures also indicate their theological foci, whether on the Word of God itself, or on the congregational context. To begin with, Park's sermon represents a good interpretative example of a preacher's devotional ardour to deliver what the Bible says, without compromise. In his sermon, the whole content and the structure follow the content, order, and structure of the passage in such a way that his sermon sounds like a running commentary (*cf.* 2.2.4). Through these sincere expositions, the audience could be brought under the impression of the authenticity of the preached message as the Word of God, as the preacher has preached the Word of God as written in the Bible. We find a similar textual sincerity in Oak's sermon. With his highly theological view of the Bible as the Word of God, and preaching as a crucial moment to deliver the very Word of God in his mind, Oak also strives to deliver this Word as written in the Bible. Thus, although he occasionally has difficulty in preaching about difficult passages, such as the SM, he willingly struggles to preach on these passages so as to carry out his preaching responsibility. From these two preachers who are obviously sincere in their attempts to interpret and deliver the Word of God as written in the Scriptures, the audience can identify an unmistakeable devotional integrity.

However, when we compare Cho's sermon with the sermons of these two preachers, we identify certain negative aspects of Bible interpretation. As examined before (3.2.4), his interpretive way to deal with the Scriptures is limited by his presupposition to meet the congregational needs. When we compare Cho's sermon to the other four sermons in terms of interpretative characteristics, another pertinent aspect of Cho's sermon is that he quotes far more often in support of his main theme (15 times in the sermon examined in our study).

Here the question may be asked: What is his motivation to quote so many biblical texts in such a presupposition-based sermon? We could find a reason in the historical background of the Korean church. Although Scriptures are emphasized as the Word of God in the Korean churches, there are also unmistakeable fundamentalistic tendencies. As JY Lee (1997:109) rightly points out, "this fundamentalistic view of the Bible is so deeply ingrained in the minds of Korean Christians that whatever is said in the pulpit must be supported by Scripture. The preacher, therefore, uses biblical quotations to prove the point. The more he or she uses biblical quotations in preaching, the more powerful the preaching is perceived to be." Another possible reason for quoting many passages in the sermon can be found in the conservative Neo-Confucianistic background that venerates textual proof of

what is authoritatively said in the same breath as the veneration of education (*cf.* 1997:36). Because Korean Christians value textual proof of what is said in the pulpit, the preacher prefers to pile text upon text, without taking the exegetical and hermeneutical contexts into due consideration.

Park and Oak's sermons belong to one category, Cho to another, and Kwak and Lee's sermons are in a third category where the preacher not only draws the main theme of the sermon from the given biblical text, but also reformulates the main theme in such a way as to meet the congregational context with a communicative strategy. For example, in Kwak's sermon, the given text is dealt with in accordance with the preacher's intention to deliver the message of the obedient Christ, but reformulated in order to meet the congregational context and relevance. The inductive approach in Lee's sermon also reveals that the preacher uses a similar rhetorical strategy by interpreting the given text in correlation with the congregational relevance.

Generally speaking, in Park and Oak's cases, the textual integrity of the sermon seems to be firmly based on their theological conviction regarding the Word of God and their responsibility to preach it. In Cho's sermon the preacher's presupposition to meet the congregational need seems to control the text interpretation in such a way that he sometimes fails to follow the theological direction of the text. In comparison to these three preachers, Kwak and Lee strive towards textual integrity by reformulating the theological kernel of the text in relation to the congregational context as seen by the preachers.

7.3 The preachers' relation with their audiences and the rhetorical characteristics

A comparative study of the preachers' views of the audience and the influence that this has on the rhetorical strategies also reveals more clearly what sermonic interests drive each preacher to make use of unique rhetorical strategies in accordance with the specific congregation. To begin with, Park views the audience as people on a pilgrimage towards the heavenly home, and who thus need to follow the Word of God in order not to fail, but to glorify God through their holy lives. Thus, with an interactive deployment of positive instruction and negative reproach, Park tries to lead his listeners to make a crucial decision about matters of life and death before God. In comparison to the other preachers, such as Kwak and Lee, Park tends to persist with a rather unilateral communication mode, and his view of the relationship between the preacher and the audience is in accordance.

When we compare Park's sermon to that of Oak, we may sense that Oak's delivery mode is also direct, strong, and fierce enough to disturb, pierce and examine the self-consciousness of the audience in the light of the preached Word. Thus, as mentioned in 5.2.5.2, while

listening to his sermon, an audience “feared that he might drive all his congregation away from the church with his frequent and directly targeted reprimands” (Kwon 1997:77). Such a direct and fierce encounter with the Word does not easily occur in Cho, Kwak, or Lee’s sermons. They try to consider the congregational preference in such a way as to deliver their sermons in a gentle, warm mode. From Oak’s balanced ecclesiology, we identified one of the reasons for this his consideration of the congregation both as a gathering of God’s chosen people out of the world, as well as Christ’s disciples sent to the world. Since he understands the audience in a bilateral perspective, God-images are also emitted in a consoling, encouraging, as well as reprimanding mode.

Balanced images of God are also identifiable in Lee’s sermon. Based upon an evangelical theological ground, Lee also proclaims a consoling God and a God who calls for the believer’s ethical responsibility. However, as examined in 6.2.5.2, Lee’s God-images and delivery mode have a more intimate, gentle, and warm tone because of the preacher’s warm personality and his communicative strategy to create an intimate, encouraging, and even humorous atmosphere. Lee considers the communicational strategy more seriously, compared to the other preachers, such as Park and Oak. While Park and Oak tend to understand the audiences in the light of traditional proclamatory preaching theology, Lee tries to see them rather in terms of the communication theory, i.e. as those whose existential needs and emotional and volitional dimensions must be taken into account, as to induce processes of decision-making. These communicative considerations are similarly found in Kwak’s sermon. In terms of the congregation’s socio-cultural locus, he regards them as highly educated, urbanized, successful, and egalitarian people. Thus, the preacher applies an intellectual, egalitarian, indirect, and narrative delivery mode, rather than unilateral and authoritative persuasion.

Although these communicative strategies are indeed important sermonic variables for effective preaching, in Cho’s sermon, however, we could identify a negative backlash. Cho views the audience in the light of their existential needs, such as their desire to overcome poverty, their failures, illnesses and anguish. Thus, by means of the sermon he tries to instil a positive and active hope and expectation for a better future. One of the dominant rhetorical strategies that express his view of the audience is the sermon’s use of conditional sentences, which emphasise the crucial responsibility of the audience to achieve and enjoy a better life by means of their voluntary actions. These conditional sentences indeed affect the proclamation of God’s sovereign grace in his salvational work.

In conclusion, we could line up the five preachers in terms of their communicative strategy in a virtual line extending from the preacher’s pole to the congregation’s pole, indicating

their view on the audience. Firstly, Park stands close to the preacher's pole in which the rhetorical strategies are drawn mainly from the preacher's conviction of the Word of God and preaching. Oak stands next to Park, but closer to the congregation pole, since he, on the one hand, tries to adhere to the Word itself; but, on the other hand, also considers the aftermath of the message that he delivered to the audience. Kwak and Lee try to keep a homiletical balance between what the preacher does and says in the pulpit and what the audience will receive in the pew. And lastly, Cho stands closest to the congregation's pole, in the sense that he draws the main theme of his sermon from the congregational context.

7.4 What role do the presers play?

A comparative study on the role of the preachers indicates that each specific image of God is based upon personal and limited locus, such as internal experience and theological conviction or external socio-cultural and political surroundings. To begin with, the image of God in Park's sermon tends to revolve around the sovereignty and glory of God with an otherworldly worldview, as God-images in his sermon are painted by means of several terms, such as suffering, perseverance, and serving to the last point of life and death. We discovered that the underlying reasons for the emphasis on these otherworldly images and God's sovereignty can be found in the harsh socio-political circumstances during the Japanese colonization and in the Buddhist background that describes the world as a "sea of suffering and sorrow" (*cf.* 2.2.6.1). In addition, Park's devotional integrity and passion for the glorification of God has been mentioned as an important aspect in understanding his role as preacher.

The preacher's devotional integrity also plays a crucial role in Oak's sermon. In the case of both Park and Oak, their devotional integrity has to do with their conviction of the Word of God and their sermonic responsibility. Furthermore, Oak's sincere personality plays a role as a kind of intermediate token to prove the authenticity of his message. In addition, the preacher's role is considered mainly in respect of a shepherd-image that leads the congregation toward the Word of God.

In Kwak and Lee's case, the element of devotional integrity is not as dominant as in Park and Oak's sermons. In Lee's sermon, the preacher's devotional integrity is related rather to the communicative strategy that helps him to preach in a more consoling and encouraging mode. A similar tendency is found in Kwak's sermon. Here the sermonic function of the shepherd image probably is more non-authoritative and dialogic in character, relevant to the highly egalitarian congregation. The most dominant function of the preacher in Kwak's sermon can be deduced from his specific theology, such as eschatological consciousness, divine dispensation, and pilgrimage under the Authorship of God.

In Cho's sermon there is also a clear relationship between the preacher's understanding of the role of the preacher and his specific theological perspectives. As described in 3.2.6.2, Cho's personal experience of fatal illness and the desperate socio-political situation in postwar modern Korea, as well as his theological perspective on the blessing of God, leads him to portray positive faces of God in such a way as to stimulate hope. However, when we examine the communicative results of the preachers' theological perspective, Cho's sermon seems to have difficulty in achieving what the sermons of the other preachers, such as Kwak and Lee, do.

In conclusion, we could identify various internal and external factors which seem to influence the preacher's proclamation of the divine presence: a personal experience of fatal illness (Cho, Oak), a specific theological view on the divine dispensation (Kwak) and blessing (Cho), the preacher's warm, joyful personality with a concurring delivery mode (Lee), devotional integrity (Park, Oak), desperate socio-political surroundings (Park, Cho), and the socio-cultural locus of the congregation (Kwak).

7.5 Where are the sermons heading?

As expected, each of the five sermons has its unique results in the individual, ecclesial, and socio-political sphere. With his clear devotional integrity as backing, Park urges the individual congregants to commit themselves to God. A similar individualistic emphasis may be pointed out in Oak's sermon, backed up with a similar devotional integrity and certain rhetorical strategies. However, in comparison to Park, Oak's sermon induces a rather warm, comfortable individual reaction in the sense that, during Oak's sermon, the audience is taken into consideration as believers who are chosen out of the world. Thus, his sermon gives pastoral consolation for these wounded, chosen people.

If we examine the five sermons in terms of individual consolation, Cho and Kwak's sermons seem likely to be more effective. However, each sermon creates a slightly different individual reaction. Firstly, Cho's sermon, that seeks to instil positive hope for a better future and an active way of thinking, appears to achieve exactly this. Perhaps that is why his sermons attract so many people to the church. However, due to a lack of sound theological integration on the issue of theodicee, the individual whose situation does not change for the better, is left in the dark. In my opinion this is an important homiletical task that contemporary Korean preaching must fulfill, namely to shed a balanced theological light on the existential burden of the congregation's life, and biblically guide them to interpret and understand their existential difficulties in life in the light of the Word. Given this sermonic responsibility, other preachers, such as Kwak, Oak and Lee, offer a sounder and more relevant theological perspective. Especially from Kwak's sermon that emphasizes

the Author of history who rules over pilgrimage with a divine dispensation, an individual may acquire appropriate consolation in order to be patient under the existential burdens of life.

Upon examining these sermons in terms of an ecclesial result, we identified unique possibilities in each sermon. Park's sermon emits his strong desire for church renewal. Given his crucial influence on recent Korean church history, it is not too much to say that this sermon, that voices his strong desire for church renewal and purity and for a better quality of seminary education, has probably also had an impact on the formation and development of ecclesial consciousness among the denominations in which he was involved.

With his concern for the church's character before God and the world, and while working as the chairman of the "Council of Pastors for Church Renewal," Oak has also been deeply involved with several ministries for church renewal. As examined in 5.2.5.1, because Oak views the audience in two ways, i.e. as God's people chosen from the world, and as Christ's disciples to be sent to the world, his sermon may bring individual consolation and ecclesial commitment in harmony with Christian responsibility. Through this balanced view of the church and its socio-political responsibility, Oak's sermons have indeed exerted remarkable influence on internal church growth and external social relief works.

A similar socio-political reaction can also be inferred from both Kwak and Lee's sermons, because both also not only have an evangelical perspective on the church and its socio-political responsibility, but also have had a remarkable influence on internal church growth and external social relief work. Thus, these three churches, where Kwak, Oak, and Lee have been ministering, are well known for their remarkable church growth and for their ardent social relief work. We could say that an important motivation for these actions of congregants could be found in their pastors' sermons with their balanced theological perspective of the church and its socio-political responsibility.

In summary, we could single out the following reactions to the preached sermons, all of which also reveal the preachers' unique interests: spiritual urgency and commitment (Park, Oak), pastoral consolation with voluntary agreement (Kwak, Oak, Lee), ecclesial consciousness of church purity (Park), quietude and comfort (Kwak), and socio-political commitment (Kwak, Oak, Lee).

7.6 Conclusion

The following two conclusions may be drawn: Firstly, the fact that God-images used in sermons are analogical to preachers' personal experience of God, theological or pastoral emphasis within some specific context, or to some specific pastoral purpose. With this in mind, Louw (1998:330) rightly points out, "Each pastor has a unique image of God which reflects his/her own experience of God and what He means to him/her personally." Moreover, since God possesses infinite attributes, preachers are neither able to see and experience all God's faces, nor express all of them completely. Rather, they cannot but paint a limited part of God's faces from their limited personal or congregational context. This limitative nature of proclamation of the divine presence does not justify a parochial and biased (ideological) reduction of God-images; rather, this limiting nature of the preacher's witness reminds us of the fact that preachers' God-images must be guided by the normative homiletical foundation that the Scriptures and Christian tradition represent. In the next chapter, we shall discuss this in more detail.

The second conclusion is the fact that proclamation of the divine presence is determined harmoniously in a dynamic relationship with the following four sermonic components: God, the Scriptures, the preacher, and the congregation. In other words, without an appropriate consideration of these four sermonic components, preaching that endeavours to proclaim the divine presence cannot produce desirable results, merely results of a one-sided, parochial and even distorted nature. As we have pointed out so far, some preachers only partially integrate these sermonic components in their formation of God-images. For example, when preachers bear in mind only the congregational preference or existential need, they seem to ignore the normative foundation of the Scriptures. Or when they adhere to their own personal experience or conviction, they ignore the congregational relevance that concerns the appropriate reception of the divine presence. For this reason, preachers need to acquire a more comprehensive understanding of how all four components of preaching work together, in such a way as to minister the divine presence as optimally as possible.

With this homiletical necessity in mind, the normative and strategic study on preaching of the divine presence will be addressed in the next chapter, in relation to the four essential components of preaching: God (ch 8), the Scriptures (ch 9), the preacher (ch 10), and the congregation (ch 11). Through this study, we shall strive to establish a normative and strategic homiletical foundation for preaching the divine presence, especially in a Korean context.

Chapter eight

The use of God-images in preaching the divine presence

8.1 Introduction

In this chapter, our interest in how the divine presence is preached to the congregation does not focus on communicative and rhetorical methods; our concern rather is a linguistic and ecclesial foundation for the proclamation of the divine presence. The more communicative and rhetorical aspects of this subject will be discussed in chapter eleven when we discuss the audience of this communication.

When we ponder our subject of how God is preached as the present One, we recognize immediately that this subject indeed carries an inherent, paradoxical tension, as formulated in the Barthian dilemma of preaching being both the Word of God and the words of man. On the one hand, this subject underlines human impossibility in the sense that the matter of the divine presence in preaching is beyond human capability. No human speech can make the divine presence occur in the world. On the other hand, this subject also involves the human responsibility to witness to God, because the church has received a divine commission to do so (Mt 28:19-20). With the Great Commission in mind, the Christian church and Reformed homiletics wrestle with this "impossible dilemma". As a starting point for preaching, this is, in my opinion, a healthy wrestling!

Given the above paradoxical tension, we realize that our study regarding the preaching as the divine presence should also be described in such a way as to reflect this paradoxical tension. Therefore, we chose to examine the pneumatological as well as ecclesial-linguistic dimensions of preaching, both of which concern the paradoxical dimensions of the subject. In order to reflect the human impossibility to induce the divine presence in preaching, the pneumatological dimension of preaching will be discussed. But, because the Spirit makes the impossible possible, the linguistic and ecclesial dimensions of preaching will also be discussed in order to reflect the divine commission of the church to witness about God, and for which the Spirit grants grace.

Thus, in this chapter, the relevant questions to be examined will be: How can we find a point of departure when it is humanly impossible to preach the divine presence? What linguistic characteristics should a sermon have to serve the divine presence? What roles do God-images play in relation to the divine presence in preaching? And lastly, which God-images are common in Korean preaching and what strategy is necessary for an optimal proclamation of the divine presence in Korea? While answering these questions, we shall

examine the following four subjects in detail: the divine nature of preaching; linguistic and communal characteristics of preaching that serves the divine presence; the Christian narrative for preaching the divine presence; and God-images in Korean preaching.

8.2 The divine nature of preaching

The presence of God in preaching lies beyond human possibility and capability. But, how can a human preacher then undertake this impossible task? We could find an appropriate answer in certain pneumatological perspectives that help a practical theological study to overcome this fundamental problem (Bohren 1980; *cf.* Firet 1986:117). Thus, to begin with, we shall briefly discuss the pneumatological dimension of the subject in such a way as to lay a homiletical foundation. Based upon this pneumatological-homiletical foundation, the divine nature of preaching will be discussed with the following definitions in mind: preaching as the naming of God and preaching as a form of prayer.

8.2.1 The pneumatological foundation for the divine presence in preaching

As the Reformed homiletical tradition continually affirms, every Christian sermon is a proclamatory occasion in which the Holy Spirit is present in such a way as to bring the proclaimed Word of God effectively to the audience. Jesus Christ Himself established this pneumatological foundation for preaching. He not only proclaimed the Kingdom of God in the power of the Holy Spirit, but also commissioned this preaching ministry to continue in the same presence and power of the Holy Spirit. His commission to proclaim the Gospel was mandated with the promise of His abiding presence in and through the Holy Spirit (Mt 28:19-20). In the same vein, St Paul's awareness of the crucial function of the Holy Spirit in preaching led him to discard the words of human wisdom or eloquence, and rely only on the Spirit of God who effectively communicates the Gospel to the listener (1 Cor 1:17, 2:1). In the proclamatory context, the main task of the Holy Spirit is to reveal the One who is being proclaimed, i.e. Jesus Christ. With this in mind, Jesus says, "When the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all truth" (Jh 16:13). In the same vein, Calvin taught that the proclaimed Word of God is inseparable from the Holy Spirit as the inner teacher, who works within the hearer to effect belief (Inst I 9.3; IV 8.13). Just as God designates the Scripture to be the "Word of God," He also provides the Holy Spirit as the true doctor of this Word, who interprets and brings to our mind the Word of Jesus Christ (Buttrick 1987:234,241). For this reason, we can conclude that the presence of God in preaching can be accomplished only through the Holy Spirit who is present in preaching for the purpose of making the proclaimed Word effective in the hearts of the congregation. A more detailed study of this pneumatological foundation will be undertaken when we discuss the preacher's sermon function in the homiletical process of "theonomic reciprocity".

8.2.2 Preaching as the naming of God

The human impossibility of inducing the divine presence in preaching can only be “overcome” in and through the Spirit. How then does the Spirit operate? What are his main objectives in preaching? According to Bohren (1971:98 a.f.), the pneumatological foundation for the possibility of preaching needs a complementary description: the naming of God. For him, to preach is to pronounce God’s Name, to hallow the Name of especially the Trinitarian God as the unsubstitutable divine Name. Through pronouncing and naming God’s name, the infinite qualitative gap between the One called and those who call collapse in preaching, and the One called comes close to us. Those who call His name are brought before Him, his presence becomes visible, and his voice audible. “In hallowing this divine Name, God, Himself, comes into our midst” (Johan Cilliers 2001).

One of the reasons why God’s name plays a crucial function in His presence can be found in the fact that God revealed Himself in His Name (Ex 3:14: ‘I am who I am’); thus, “God’s name is the form of His nearness and presence” (cf. Fiet 1986:19). This is revealed vividly in the connection often made between the sanctuary and the name of the Lord. For example, in Deuteronomy, I and II Kings, and I and II Chronicles, the temple is recurrently described as “the place that the Lord will choose to cause His Name to dwell there.” In answer to Solomon’s prayer that the Lord be attentive to the prayers which would be offered in the place, of which he said “My name shall be there” (I Ki 8:29), the Lord replies: “I have consecrated this house which you have built, and put my name there for ever; my eyes and my heart will be there for all time” (I Ki 9:3; cf. II Ch 7:16). After revealing His Name in Exodus 3:14, God adds: “This is my name for ever, the name by which I am to be remembered from generation to generation” (Ex 3:15).

Because God’s name is the form of Yahweh’s nearness and presence, preaching that names Him also expresses this presence, verbalises the God who goes with His people as One who offers Himself in His name and cares for them. Only when God’s name is called and hallowed correctly, can preaching overcome the human impossibility of proclaiming the present One.

8.2.3 Preaching the divine presence as an ecclesial practice of prayer

We now also need to pay attention to the opposite side of the divine nature of preaching, i.e. to the fact that this homiletical practice of naming God does not guarantee an automatic presence of God. To name God is not a recipe or a homiletical scheme ensuring the divine presence in preaching. In addition, although the Lord has promised always to be present where His name is remembered, named, and hallowed, this promise does not remove the

possibility of His name being incorrectly called in preaching. As Cilliers (2001) points out, “there is also inflation in the use of God’s name.” Given this terrible possibility, how can our preaching hallow God’s name? One possibility can be found when we define preaching as an ecclesial form of prayer to God.⁷

As rightly pointed out by Cilliers (2001), “our theology and preaching are not an ingenious piece of scaffolding that we erect to bring or keep God upright.” We cannot end our naming of God with the false assurance that this naming must bring a divine presence. Rather, we can name Him only in prayer and expectation. In prayer and expectation, preaching that names God can be offered to God as an ecclesial sacrifice so as to implore the presence of God among His people, as He promised.

The basic form and depth structures of preaching, in this sense, remain one of prayer. Preaching without epiclesis is not preaching. Who cannot say *kyrie eleison*, cannot preach. To preach is to stretch your arms to God, not alone with your uncertainty and brokenness, but also with the expectation that God will reveal Himself here and now so that his Mystery deepens. To preach is to stand empty before God, open before Him, full of questions, expectation, tension – which always again emanates in *veni, Creator Spiritus!* (Come, Creator-Spirit!) (Cilliers 2001).

Thus far, we have discussed the divine nature of preaching in order to lay a homiletical foundation for our subject, mainly in respect of the pneumatological prerequisite for preaching the divine presence, preaching and the naming of God, and preaching as prayer to God. Based upon this divine nature of preaching, we shall now examine the linguistic and communal characteristics of preaching which hopes to serve the presence of God.

8.3 Linguistic and communal characteristics of preaching

Through the analysis of the Korean sermons, the usage of certain God-images became apparant. In the analysis we paid attention mainly to the dogmatic and propositional content of these images. Now we must turn our attention to the linguistic and communal nature of these images. From this foundation, we hope to further our discussion on the preaching of the divine presence and the homiletical function of God-images, especially in a Korean context. For this purpose, the mystical approach to the divine presence (proposed mainly by Rudolf Otto 1946) must be examined critically as one of the counter views. Thereafter we will focus on the cultural linguistic approach as an alternative that offers an appropriate way to overcome the spiritual and emotional hindrances, which bogs down the preaching of the divine presence in Korean.

⁷ Preaching is like prayer not only in terms of the utterance to God, but also in the sense that the message is the church’s, as emphasized by Craddock (1985:44–7).

8.3.1 The Mystical approach to the divine presence as advocated by Rudolf Otto

In the field of a human awareness of divine transcendence, Otto's (1917) work, *Das Heilige* (*The idea of the Holy*),⁸ was seminal. Trying to overcome the bias and limitation of 19th century rationalism, in this influential study, Otto pursued "with great psychological insight" (Robin 1990:517) the primal experience of the sacred power, with accompanying feelings of awe, fear, purity, danger, etc. In this book, Otto (1946:3) regards the holy as an experience peculiar to religion, and acknowledges that the holy, fundamentally, is a non-rational and ineffable datum of human experience. In order to isolate the holy from either ethical or theological conceptions, Otto (1946:7) coined the word 'numinous' to describe this unique religious phenomenon. Considered subjectively, a person's encounter with the numinous evokes a profound 'creature-consciousness' or 'creature-feeling.' According to Otto, the central character of a numinous experience is a '*mysterium tremendum et fascinans*' (a dreadful and yet alluring mystery). The two feelings are in opposition: one an overwhelming, awesome and, for this reason, repellent negative feeling, and the other, an attractive and fascinating, even intoxicating, positive feeling.

In this book, *The idea of the Holy*, Otto continually clings to the presupposition that the growth of human rationality is accompanied by a 'schematization' of the non-rational *mysterium*, as is evident in the development of dogmatic norms and moral systems. As the human religious consciousness is filled more and more with rational and moral elements, the non-rational primal experience of the holy may appear to be eclipsed; but is never lost. According to Otto, if it were, the religious sense itself would be lost. However, in his view, the element of a non-rational numinous is always retained because it is the very essence of religion.

In a sense, Otto has performed a valuable contribution in drawing attention to a non-rational element in the human awareness of the Holy that others have overlooked. As Otto continually insists, human awareness of the Holy lies beyond rational and intellectual recognition, because God is present beyond humanness. Thus, as a central character of the numinous experience, *mysterium tremendum et fascinans* - a dreaded, yet alluring mystery - may have some relevance to the Christian response to the righteous and loving God.

However, when Otto tries to grasp his numinous experience extensively, encompassing from the lowest level of demons or gods (as in ghost stories) to highly developed religious systems, the uniqueness of the holy awareness of the revealed Lord of Christianity may

⁸ The first English version was translated by John W. Harvey, and published in 1923. The page numbers in this dissertation refer to the tenth English version (1946).

become unclear in a Christian consciousness. Contrary to Otto's view, the central theme of biblical religion, beginning with the Law and the Prophets and proceeding through the New Testament, is more than a transcendental and awesome feeling. In the Bible, when the Holy enters humanity, it is inevitably charged with ethical responsibility. In this vein, Brown (1968:233) rightly criticizes:

Otto's theory as it stands puts an impersonal idea at the heart of religion instead of the living personal God. In the last analysis his numinous is not the living God of the Bible who is supremely rational and utterly righteous as well as utterly loving. His Deity is not one who takes the initiative in his dealing with men.

In addition, the moral holiness of God also requires a reflective and contemplative commitment as a personal response required of men before the living, personal God. Otto so strongly insists on the non-rational dimension of the Holy as to overlook this important contemplative and interpretative dimension, that of an ethical response inside the field of a human awareness of a divine presence.

Another inappropriate aspect of Otto's idea on the Holy can be discovered in his epistemological assumption about the distance separating the numinous experience, not only from religious language, but also from tradition. Indeed, much of *The idea of the Holy* is devoted to the struggle of religious experience to cast off what Otto views as its imprisonment by inadequate religious language. However, many philosophers and phenomenologists of religion have recently been very critical of the epistemological assumption regarding the relation between experience, language, and tradition, which can be found in Otto's work. For this reason, Schlamm (1992:549) criticizes as follows:

Otto's account of religious experience and language in *The Idea of the Holy* is epistemologically naïve in its failure to acknowledge that all experience is mediated by language and tradition, ... in spite of the fact that the degree to which tradition influences experience will vary considerably from one type of experience to another.

In this sense, it can obviously be argued that a sharp distinction between language and religious experience is unintelligible. When we examine the phenomenology of all our religious experience, we discover that religious experience is, in a sense, inseparable from religious language and tradition.

In conclusion, Otto offers a valuable contribution by paying attention to the non-rational element in the human awareness of a divine presence and to the contrasting character of the experience of the Holy, *mysterium tremendum et fascinans*. However, his view of God lacks

interpretative endeavour for ethical fulfilment before the living, personal God. Moreover, his mystical understanding of the human awareness of a divine presence overlooks a proper relationship between religious experience, language, and tradition. From these critical reflections on Otto's study, we could identify the homiletical limitation of the non-rational and mystical element of a human awareness of a divine presence, and raise the homiletical necessity for linguistic, ethical, and communal dimensions of this subject.

8.3.2 Religious language needed for preaching the divine presence

A more comprehensive perspective on the close relationship between religious experience, language, and tradition in the Christian community and practice can be acquired from Lindbeck's classification of religion and theological language. As briefly mentioned before (in 1.2 Introduction), in his book, *The nature of doctrine* (1984) Lindbeck works with three possible paradigms for understanding theories of religion and theological language. Scholars from a mixture of disciplines influenced his work, but one of his basic contributions is indebted to the legacy of the later Wittgenstein. We shall examine these three views in order to understand some of the ways in which human language about a divine presence may function.

8.3.2.1 A cognitive-propositionalist view

According to Lindbeck, the first possible way of understanding the language of religion is the 'cognitive-propositionalist' view. According to this scheme, the cognitive dimension of propositions found in religious discourse is emphasized and statements are seen to be informative and descriptive. The emphasis is on the objective and permanence of the claims of truth, as presented by language. Lindbeck (1984:16) says, "For a propositionalist, if a doctrine is once true, it is always true, and if it is once false, it is always false." An example of the view that Lindbeck has in mind is the view of language found in the early writing of Wittgenstein, especially the *Tractatus logico-philosophicus*. For the early Wittgenstein, human language 'pictures,' once and for all, a state of affairs that exists apart from the language. We might say that there is a 'one-to-one' correspondence between the language and the reality pictured by the language.

We have a similar tendency in the traditional preaching tradition that emphasizes the identity in meaning between what the preacher says and what the audience receives. According to Rose (1997:17ff), in the traditional homiletical theory that envisaged the human preacher as an authoritative figure whose main duty was to tell people what to believe and why they should believe it, language was understood in terms of the verbal identity between what the preacher says and what the audience receives. In this cognitive

and propositional view of preaching, the underlying conviction was that, if language is clear, what the preacher transmits will be identical to what the audience receives (1997:17). Here we find a close bond between human language, as one of the sermonic mediums for the Word of God, and the objective reality that traditional homiletics tried to convey in preaching.

However, a problem with this bond arises when the verbal identity between words and reality dissolves. In the mid-1960s, Otto Semmelroth (1965:35) claimed, "the problem of language begins with the Fall, when word and thing were torn asunder." Helmut Thielicke (1965:45) similarly described the limitation of language in preaching: "Language once adequately expressed a particular relationship to reality, but now when we, whose relationship to reality has changed, use the same words, they become untrue. They cease to be a means of grasping and comprehending reality." James Daane (1980:18) lamented that in much of contemporary life "The nexus between language and reality has been broken and words cut loose from their mooring and cast adrift, so that the meaning of language is up for grabs." From this perspective, "Words are not regarded as having rootage in objective realities, but are subject to such meaning as the user sees fit to attribute to them" (1980:19). As a result, through unstable and ambiguous human language that presupposes an epistemological gap between human language and the divine reality, it appears to be impossible to mediate any "objective" divine presence, also in preaching. This seems the death of the traditional view of language, and of preaching, which presupposes a verbal identity between what the preacher witnesses of God and what the audience receives.

8.3.2.2 An experiential-expressive view

The second possible way of understanding religious language, as characterized by Lindbeck (1984:16), is what he calls the 'experiential-expressive' type. According to this view, religious doctrines are "non-informative and non-discursive symbols of inner feelings, attitudes, or existential orientations." Here Lindbeck sees a polyvalence in the way doctrines function: they can have various meanings at different times and in different circumstances. The crucial dimension here is not whether doctrines are permanently true or not, but rather how effective they are at articulating or expressing what is essentially an experience of the subject or community. According to Lindbeck (1984:16; cf. Campbell 1997:124), this tradition of 'experiential-expressivism' can be traced back to Schleiermacher who insisted that Christian faith is grounded in man's general experience of God. In this view, the basic religious experience is prior to the language about it. The language then expresses that experience and can do so in a number of different forms relative to time and context.

According to Rose (1997:10), the following three convictions are distinctive in this perspective of religious language. First, language shapes human consciousness. Therefore, it has the power to bring about changes in perception, values or worldviews. Language reflects a construct of reality in human consciousness and organizes a person's perception of the world. Following Martin Heidegger, Craddock (1974:36) claims, "reality is linguistically constructed, for language is the 'house of being.'" Our "very being is founded in language" (1974:37). Thus, to change language is to change the inner construct of reality. New language can bring new reality into being.

This close relationship between language and human consciousness brings us to the second conviction that characterizes the experiential-expressive type of language. Scholars, who subscribe to this view, agree that sermonic language should also reflect human experience, because language not only shapes human consciousness, but also reformulates human experience as well. Thus, for example, Rice (1970:13) insists that sermonic language inevitably reflects human experience. For him, theology as it "appears in Christian preaching" is "the distinctive shape which the preacher gives to experience." Thus, all language reflects the user's experience.

A third conviction about language that characterizes the experiential-expressive type of preaching language is that words both say and do things, that words are events. Two influences here are the speech act theory formulated mainly by the work of JL Austin and the new hermeneutic. Austin (1975:3-6) distinguishes between a 'constative' statement that describes or reports a truth or falsehood and a 'performative' statement that performs an action. In a performative utterance, one is not, or is not merely, saying something but doing something (1975:25). Craddock is a primary channel through which Austin's insights entered homiletical theory. He claims, "Words not only report something; they do something" (Craddock 1974:33-4). His hope in preaching is to recover the dynamic and creative function of language. Another undergirding conviction that words are events is found in the new hermeneutic. Formulated by Ernst Fuchs as well as Gerhard Ebeling (1963:319), the new hermeneutic holds that words happen. Therefore, texts, which consist of words, are "word-events." Ebeling argues, "A sermon is not exposition of the text as past proclamation, but is itself proclamation in the present – and that means the sermon is execution of the text" (1963:331). In other words, the preacher's task is to recreate in the sermon the word-event present in the text so that the sermon becomes a similar word-event for the congregation. Then, our question will be, can we find an alternative way to preach the divine presence from this 'experiential-expressive' view of language?

Charles Campbell (1997) examines the homiletical problem, harboured in the experiential-

expressive understanding of religious language. In his book, *Preaching Jesus*, Campbell (1997:142-145) criticizes narrative preaching as being based upon the experiential-expressive understanding of religious language. According to him, the experiential focus of contemporary narrative homiletics can result in a theological relationalism that makes God too dependent on immediate human experience. Thomas Long (1989:40-41) has also raised this most basic issue, highlighting the limitations and dangers of a simplistic reliance on human experience:

There is a deep theological danger in measuring preaching by its capacity to generate religious experience. Theologian Hendrikus Berkhof has reminded us that, in the Old Testament, one of the reasons why Israel was continually abandoning Yahweh for Baal was that Baal was always more available, more visible, providing blessings that were more predictable. One could always count on Baal for a religious experience, but not so Yahweh. Yahweh tended, on many occasions, to have a hidden face, to be absent in those times when the people yearned for a more readily available God. In sum, God does not always move us when we desire to be moved, and everything that moves us deeply is not God.

In addition to this basic theological limitation of experiential-expressive preaching, Campbell (1997:142-145) notes several more issues. Firstly, the emphasis on individual experience tends to locate the Christian faith in the private sphere, where the postmodern society wanted to keep it. Secondly, by linking the notion of the 'Word-event' to human experience, contemporary homiletics, that adhere to the experiential-expressive understanding of language, tends to be viewed as a symbolic expression of experience. In connection with the important function of the community for linguistic practices, Thiselton (1980:443, cf. 354) also conclusively criticizes the new hermeneutic's view on language that has to do with the word-event as follows; "Its view of language comes too near at times to word-magic, and tends to ignore the fact that language is founded on convention. Moreover, in devaluing the place of assertions, it overlooks the complexity and variety of functions performed by statement. Even performative language presupposes certain conventions and states of affairs."

Thirdly, the emphasis on the individual and experiential event has limited the attention that contemporary homiletics has given to the role of preaching in building up the community of faith. A privatistic, individualistic, experiential approach in religious language simply cannot adequately address the communal dimensions of preaching. For this reason, we could say that the experiential-expressive view of religious language does not offer an appropriate homiletical foundation for preaching as we choose to understand it.

8.3.2.3 A cultural-linguistic view

Lindbeck's third and most important option for understanding religious doctrines and language is what he calls the "cultural-linguistic" view. Here, the emphasis is on its analogy with the learning of 'acquired skills'. When learning a language or growing up in a culture, there are no initial questions as to whether the rules or procedures are permanently true or adequately expressive. The concern rather is with learning rules or with inhabiting a world of codes and linguistic practices. This view is supported further by his perspective on religion as comprehensive interpretive schemes, which are usually embodied in myths or narratives and heavily ritualized, and structure human experience and understanding of self and world (Lindbeck 1984:32). As Lindbeck (1984:33) summarizes:

[Religion] is not primarily an array of beliefs about the true and the good (though it may involve these), or a symbolism expressive of basic attitudes, feelings, or sentiments (though these will be generated). Rather it is similar to an idiom that makes possible the description of realities, the formulation of beliefs, and the experiencing of inner attitudes, feelings, and sentiments. Like a culture or language, it is a communal phenomenon that shapes the subjectivities of individuals rather than being primarily a manifestation of those subjectivities. It comprises a vocabulary of discursive and nondiscursive symbols together with a distinctive logic or grammar in terms of which this vocabulary can be meaningfully deployed.

Within this framework, becoming a Christian is dealing not only with having some 'religious experience,' but also with learning a particular language and set of practices; it is the acquisition of particular communal and linguistic skills, which are behavioural and dispositional as well as linguistic and conceptual (Campbell 1997:68).

This cultural-linguistic approach to religion and religious language in our opinion offers an appropriate homiletical foundation for articulating the divine presence in preaching. Since the Christian confession, practices, and traditions must be understood in terms of the communal and linguistic process of socialization or enculturation with a particular linguistic community, rather than some individual and experiential event, one of the most relevant ways to explicate the homiletical significance of the divine presence in preaching should also be understood in terms of an enculturation process. In this enculturation process, after entering the Christian community, Christian believers while learning and assimilating the specific language and practice of Christian preaching, come to know and confess the fact that they are brought to the God who is also present in preaching. From this view, we can conclude that the preaching of the divine presence cannot be understood in terms of a mere dogmatic statement that must be cognitively accepted, nor that of an individual, awesome experience of God. The preaching of the divine presence should also involve the

Christian linguistic community, its unique religious language and practice, in which a Christian, after entering the Christian community and assimilating the specific language and practice, comes to recognize and confess according to the same practice, and should, no, cannot but, take place within these contours and contexts.

8.4. The Christian narrative for preaching the Divine presence

In the previous section, we examined the linguistic and ecclesial foundation for preaching the divine presence, and came to the conclusion that the divine presence in preaching should be understood in terms of the comprehensive enculturation process in which Christians are assimilated through continual linguistic and communal practice. If not, we are faced with an abstraction. God becomes present in the community of believers, through language. Now, if the abovementioned is true, then one of my (further) presuppositions in this study is that the Christian narrative offers a suitable homiletical foundation for the formation of certain linguistic and communal characteristics that could be conducive for preaching that serves the divine presence. It is the Christian narrative that the Christian community has drawn from the Bible, for example in the form of God-images, metaphor, biblical stories or narratives, which we now turn to. This Christian narrative offers the church a normative, ecclesial, and hermeneutical scheme for the proclamation of the present One.

Then, the appropriate questions would be: What is the Christian narrative? How can we define it? What function does the Christian narrative play in preaching the divine presence? We now attend to these questions.

8.4.1 Definition of the Christian narrative

In the past few years many theologians and homileticians have mentioned the category of "narrative" as a suggestive and potentially useful device for addressing perennial theological and homiletical problems. However, according to Stroup (1981:71), there is no consensus on precisely what the term means. He divides the literature on narrative and Christian narrative into the following three broad categories: a theological introduction to the study of Christianity, narrative characteristics of human life and experience, and Christian narrative to practice the divine identity in the Christian community (1981:71-84).

The first two camps employ story or narrative as an introduction to the study of religion in general and Christianity in particular. Here 'narrative' is used to describe and explain the location of religion in human experience and the meaning of 'faith' in relation to a person's encounter with other people and the world. A second group of theologians has taken up the

question of the experiential roots of narrative. Stroup mentions the following four scholars who offer sophisticated discussions of the narrative characteristic of human life and experience: Stephen Crites, James William McClendon Jr, Stanley Hauerwas and John Dunne. Among them, Crites (1971:291) argues that “one of the conditions for being human is the possession of the capacity for having a history, and that the formal quality of experience through time is inherently narrative.” In a similar vein, Hauerwas (1977:76) also believes that “The meaning of character is to be found in narratives and that a story is a narrative account that binds events and agents together in an intelligible pattern, and in so doing offers a description and explanation of why things are the way they are.”

In spite of these sophisticated discussions, the critical reader may want a specific example of a narrative and long to see theories anchored in specific texts. This is one of the aspects that distinguish the third camp from the other two, because this third camp, along with biblical scholars, has worked with the Scriptures. While other forms of narrative theology may be bogged down in endless discussions about what is and what is not a narrative, biblical theologians can point to specific texts in Scripture as examples of narrative and move on to the more important question of how these Christian narratives function in the life of Christian communities.

This discussion of the nature of Christian narrative was partly stirred by Eric Auerbach's remarkable book, *Mimesis* (1946). On the basis of his analysis of the style of Christian narrative, Auerbach believes that the biblical text presents the reader with a vision of the way things are, a representation of reality in which Scripture makes an imperialistic claim. “The challenge the biblical text presents to the reader is not whether the reader can appropriate the text and its claims within the reader's world; the challenge is whether the reader can and will enter into the world of the text” (Stroup 1981:81). Based upon Auerbach's discussion of the imperialistic nature of the Christian narrative, in his book *The identity of Jesus Christ* (1975), Hans Frei argues that the New Testament not only depicts a world but it also renders the identity of an agent. For Frei, Jesus reveals who He is in the Christian narrative “by consenting to God's intention and by enacting that intention in the midst of the circumstances that devolve around Him as the fulfillment of God's purpose” (Stroup 1991:429).

Based upon these discussions on narrative, Stroup (1981:91,95) suggests that Christian narrative can be understood in terms of the interaction or conflict between the identity narratives of individuals and those of the Christian community. When we admit that the Bible is the most representative of the Christian community's identity narratives, then figure 7 below clearly shows what happens in the Christian narrative as presented in

preaching. The Bible is God’s revelation offering His salvation to His people. When the Bible is preached, this ecclesial act of preaching does not preach the Bible as an end in itself; rather, the Bible is preached in such a way as to present Christian narrative, and this Christian narrative in preaching renders God’s salvational world and history to those who behold it, and invites them to this world. Here, they come to encounter the presence of God who speaks and leads them into the new world.

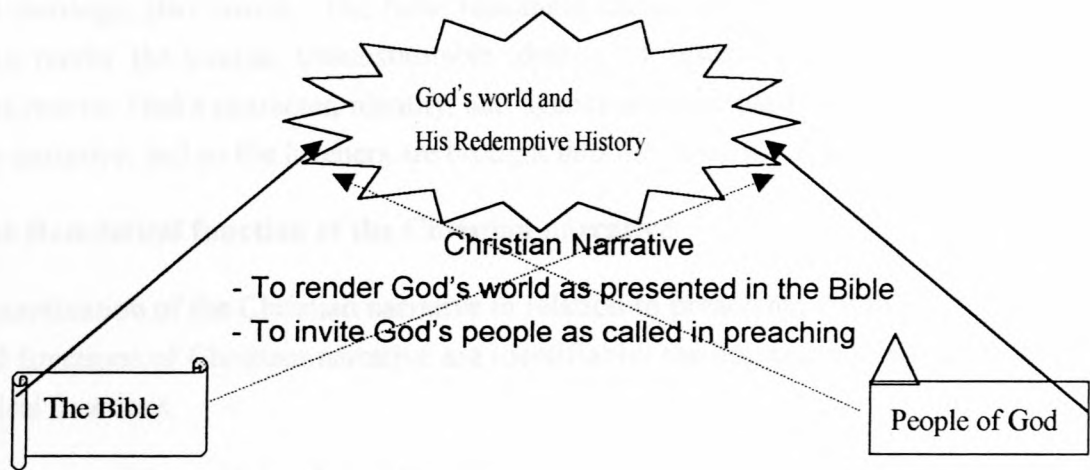


FIG. 8 CHRISTIAN NARRATIVE IN PREACHING

Through this pneumatological and verbal conflict between the identity narrative of the Bible and that of the individual in preaching, Christian narrative discloses to an assembly of believers a ‘world’ in which to dwell (Frei 1975:xv; Riebert 1990:110; Eslinger 1995:27ff).

Indeed, any narrative functions to disclose some kind of world, whether of romantic escape or horror or of some other sort.... All persons and communities dwell within story-formed worlds. In this regard, Christians are those who dwell within one distinctive world as disclosed within its biblical narrative and its storied tradition (Eslinger 1995:27).

While hearing the Christian narrative presented in preaching, the gathered people of God enter into God’s world as rendered by the narrative, which is verbally presented to them, and they are called to join and dwell together through the work of the Holy Spirit. This divine nature of Christian narrative in which God is engaged connotes the distinctive character of the world it discloses – a world in which God and His Name are hallowed, outcasts are sought and restored to the community, sinners are forgiven, healing is found, and hospitality is extended and received.

Its divine characteristic becomes clearer when we examine what the Christian narrative renders. Closely related to the characteristic of the Christian narrative to disclose to God’s

gathered people the distinctive alternative world, is its power to render God's identity and character (Frei 1975:86ff; Riegert 1990:111; Eslinger 1995:28). The narrative renders a character, and offers an identity description of an agent, namely God (Lindbeck 1984:121). According to Stroup (1981:202), the Christian narrative "provides the context in which the individual encounters God and experiences the grace that makes possible the process of understanding involved in reinterpreting personal history." In the same vein, Charles Campbell (1997:55), who draws a new narrative homiletics based upon Hans Frei's postliberal theology, also insists, "The New Testament narratives have a specific function, which is to render the unique, unsubstitutable identity of Jesus Christ." In a preaching context this means: God's character, identity, and agency are disclosed to those listening to this unique narrative, and so the listeners are brought into the presence of God.

8.4.2 The Homiletical function of the Christian narrative

Upon an examination of the Christian narrative in relation to preaching, the following three homiletical functions of Christian narrative are identifiable: the normative, communal, and hermeneutical functions.

8.4.2.1 The normative and regulative function

As implied in the cultural-linguistic view of religion and religious language, Christian narratives that witness God-images should be understood, not as cognitive and dogmatic propositions about God that may be extracted from the Bible, but as normative frames that play a regulative role for the witness of God in the church. Christian narratives that witness divine matters are normative in that they guide the church how to speak and witness about the Triune God and about Jesus Christ; or rather, they direct us how not to speak about them. For example, the Christian narrative about the Fall of Adam engenders the need for human redemption; this narrative will not cause pessimism in the listeners because the Christian narrative functions as a kind of meta-narrative to guide the church how to read the Bible's partial narrative. Within this broad normative frame, various God-images in the Bible can be read and understood.

This does not mean that the Bible depends on regulation by the Christian narrative; rather, the detailed symbols, stories, metaphors, and biblical narratives come from the Bible. Here, we need to take note of the circulative function between the Scriptures and Christian narrative. The Scriptures provide Christian narratives for how the church witnesses the scriptural world and itself in this world. Then, in turn, Christian narratives that were constructed upon a scriptural foundation guide the church on how to witness and present God within the narrative-world of the Scriptures, a linguistic world into which audiences

are invited. Stroup (1981:145) remarks on the normative function of Christian narrative and its circulative relation with the Bible as follows:

At the center of Scripture is a set of narratives and these narratives are the frame around which the whole of Scripture is constructed. Apart from these narratives the Prophets would not be intelligible and without the frame of the Gospel narratives it would be difficult to understand the full meaning of the parables, epistles, creeds, and hymns of the New Testament.

In this sense, a Christian narrative begins with the Scriptures and biblical narratives, but it also includes the history of its appropriation by previous Christian communities, and functions as a normative frame to guide the church on how to read the Bible, witness about God, and produce the world of God in preaching.

8.4.2.2 The ecclesial prerequisites of Christian narrative

To begin with, Christian narrative that discloses God's world to the listeners, sustains the Christian community. Through shared memory and communal practice, Christian narrative binds individuals into a Christian community where, together, they seek and share a common view of God, common language and practices to hallow God's name, a common vision of God's world and of salvational history.

One of the reasons why Christian narrative has such a constructive function in the church can be found in the sense that "the identity of a community like that of a person requires the interpretation of historical experience, and narrative seems to be the appropriate literary genre for articulating and interpreting the past" (Stroup 1981:145). With its constructive force, Christian narrative embodies a shared memory and offers a communal view of humans, the world and of God, which binds individuals into a community.

The church is not only sustained by Christian narrative that proclaims the presence of God in preaching, but, vice versa, this witness also needs the Christian community to guide it on how to witness to, and render the presence of God. As confirmed in 8.3.2.3, the preaching of the divine presence cannot be understood in respect of some intellectual presentation or individual experience of a divine phenomenon; rather it is the ecclesial enculturation process in which the Christian narrative functions in revealing the divine presence within the church's shared vision and practices. Through these shared ecclesial practices, Christian narrative may overcome individual and ideological interpretative limitations, and be equipped with ecclesial virtues and ethics capable of appropriately attuning to the divine presence and reacting to it. Eslinger (1995:30) understands this ecclesial prerequisite in terms of a double movement: "There is, then, a double movement of the Christian

community with regard to its biblical narrative - on the one hand, a calling in the stories inviting Christians to become who they are; and on the other, a formative intending so that those Christian people may truly hear the Word.”

8.4.2.3 The hermeneutical engagement of Christian narrative

When the church employs a Christian narrative to witness about God, this engagement implies hermeneutical activity and guidance on how to respond to God’s world and to His presence. Thus, if ignoring the hermeneutical dimension of the Christian narrative, this ecclesial engagement with it may end just in the church’s closed circle where the vested interest of the church never changes. According to Loughlin (1996:36), when Christian narrative discloses a world in which to dwell, this disclosure establishes an absolute, tyrannical claim upon those who face this disclosure. Those who face this disclosure will either submit to or rebel against it. For this reason, when the church is engaged with Christian narrative, and as a result of this engagement, when God’s world and His presence are revealed to the audience, they also have to examine which hermeneutical scheme the Christian narrative presupposes; whether this narrative appropriately renders God’s world and His presence, or not; and whether the divine claim is biblically based in such a way as to present an appropriate world and face of God, or whether it is corrupted by the vested interest of power.

According to Stroup (1981:200ff), to confess the Christian faith is to engage in a hermeneutical activity that entails interpretation and understanding. In this sense, to confess God’s presence, as rendered by a Christian narrative, is also to engage in this activity

When a Christian narrative is presented in preaching in such a way as to bring the narrative of personal identity into God’s meta-narrative, and to bring about an encounter between them, the engagement with the Christian narrative and its resulting confession of the divine presence cannot end in the acceptance of just any cognitive dogmatic presupposition, or mere religious experience. Rather, it entails constructive hermeneutical activity and sensitivity, so that the confession of the divine presence in the end may bring forth the fruit desired by the Christian narrative. A more detailed study of the hermeneutical dimension of Christian narrative in preaching will be done in the next chapter.

8.5 God-images implemented in Korean preaching

Thus far, we have discussed a possible normative foundation for the question how the divine presence of God could be preached. We confirmed the linguistic and communal nature of such preaching, as well as the importance of the Christian narrative. Based upon

this normative foundation, we shall now make a strategic suggestion on this subject, especially in relation to the Korean preaching context.

As our theme in this section concerns God-images in Korean preaching, we shall briefly examine several dominant aspects of God-images used in Korean preaching, and then make some strategic suggestions in the light of the (previous) normative foundation. Thus, related questions to be discussed in this section are: What are the unique aspects of God-images used in Korean preaching? Do indigenous religions have a definitive influence on these images? If so, what is this influence, and, is it negative or constructive for the normative foundation? What strategic suggestions must be made in this context? With these questions in mind, the following three subjects will be discussed: sensibility and emphasis on the spiritual or emotional impression; individual, apolitical and otherworldly images of God; and emphasis on the image of God that is concerned with suffering.

8.5.1 God-images: An emotional impression vs. a transformative hermeneutical frame

One of the intriguing aspects that we must discuss at this point is sermonic emphasis on the spiritual dimension, which sometimes is evident in an emotional emphasis in Korean sermons. Thus, according to Korean Christians, as long as the sermon makes a spiritual impression, or evokes some emotional enrichment, all its other ingredients seem to be insignificant. Some homiletical discussions on the spiritual and emotional emphasis in Korean preaching find an underlying cause in their indigenous religions' heritage and its influence upon their preaching practices.

As examined in 1.2.1.2, many Korean indigenous religions, especially Shamanism and Confucianism, hold a syncretized worldview with its indistinct barrier between the gods and humans to the degree that the lines that separate gods, spirits, humans and nature are very thin and blurred so that they share a common, intimate life (*cf.* Hiebert 1983:36-37). This syncretized worldview has led Koreans to envisage the existence of spirits in the human world and their supernatural powers operating in their lives. Moreover, although conversion to Christianity has given new eyes to Korean Christians to see the biblical images of God, this spiritual sensibility still exerts such a resilient influence in their mentality as to lead them, also in the preaching context, to anticipate and easily seek some unusual token to demonstrate proof of the divine Being's presence. With these underlying causes in mind, some Korean homileticians ascribe the sensitivity to spiritual movement or the emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit at least partially to the Shamanistic worldview. For example, JY Lee (1997:71) insists, "Korean preachers are fascinated by the work of the Holy Spirit because of their background in shamanism, which is also a religion of spirits. According to the Korean mind-set, as long as the sermon is spiritual, all other ingredients

are insignificant.”

In a positive sense, Korean Shamanism seems to assist the Korean Christian to anticipate and acknowledge the presence and work of God, also in preaching, in comparison to the Western church where the spiritual emphasis is often lacking. However, in a negative sense, the Shamanistic inclination to anticipate the imminent spirit within the human world exerts such a negative effect as to erode even the Christian perspective on the presence of God in preaching. With the excessive Shamanistic influence on Korean preaching in mind, JY Lee (1997:73) again points out:

The danger that I feel is that undue emphasis on the Spirit in Korean preaching causes people to seek such things as miracles, ecstasy, personal power, and wealth, instead of the power of Christian witness and prophecy. This kind of misdirected emphasis is rampant in Korean preaching because of Korea's root in the Shamanistic tradition.

EJ Kim (1999:32,54) also points out, “Many preachers in Korea tend to overemphasize spiritual experience in preaching without proper theological guidelines and thus cause spiritual confusion within the church.” Therefore, in my opinion, we must develop a suitable homiletic to utilize constructively this syncretized worldview that is so ready and eager to anticipate and acknowledge the imminent work of a divine Being.

Luckily, we need not re-invent the wheel in this regard. There are some answers to this matter in inter alia the Reformed homiletics. As pointed out previously in this chapter, the divine presence cannot be produced by some mystical or experiential emphasis in preaching. When the experience of some emotional enrichment or even of ecstasy becomes an end in itself, preaching isolates people from the real world and encourages them to seek false emotional security in the psychic world. This is as destructive as drugs that people become addicted to (JY Lee 1997:74). Rather, the divine presence should be witnessed to in the linguistic and communal practices of the church, with the Christian narrative that guides the church to rightly identify the worshipped One. Through continual dialogue with Reformed homiletics, Korean preaching, that is ready to acknowledge the divine presence in preaching, can find a proper way not to fall into the Korean indigenous religions' swamp that is so deeply rooted in the Korean religious psyche. Rather, with the syncretized worldview that encourages the imminent work of the divine Being as backdrop, Korean preaching can preach God-images in such a way as to identify and proclaim appropriately the divine presence, as Reformed homiletics also envisage.

We therefore also need to pay attention to God-images, not as spiritual and emotional igniters, but for the hermeneutical perspective that helps listeners to interpret and

understand their lives anew in the light of the Christian narrative. As explained in 8.3.2.3, preaching of the divine presence must not be done in relation to some provisionally attractive faces or characteristics of God, but in the light of the Christian narrative that is offered to the audience as a hermeneutical scheme to guide them to identify God anew, relative to their real lives. In other words, preaching that emphasizes the divine presence should also encourage the audience to engage the real issues that confront them in their lives, and should nurture the audience as truly loving, caring persons, enabling them to transform the world (JY Lee 1997:74). In this sense, God-images implemented in preaching should not end in plausible and attractive dogmatic contents only, but in a hermeneutical scheme or schemes to engage the practical life of the congregation with the presence of God in the world. This will be discussed further in the next chapter when we shall deal with the hermeneutical dimension of preaching the divine presence.

8.5.2 Individual and apolitical images versus communal and socio-political images

A second significant matter that concerns the use of God-images in Korean preaching, can be examined in the light of the content and mode of God-images in Korean preaching. Firstly, when we examine God-images in Korean preaching with regard to their content, they tend to fall into categories of individual, apolitical, and otherworldly images, all of which need the assistance of other images, as God, pictured only as these inactive images, cannot but be seen as entrapped within the walls of the church's individual concerns or vested interests. In connection with God-images in Korean preaching, we need to note the warning: "an inappropriate understanding of God can give rise to dysfunctional or pathological faith behavior" (Louw 1998:331). For this reason, preaching of the divine presence should also involve more balanced images of God.

Secondly, because of the Confucian background, God-images in Korean preaching tend to be rather moralistic. These images may be a burden on the shoulders of the congregation and over-emphasize ethical responsibility. However, as pointed out in the previous part of this chapter, the emerging new situation of the Korean church requires preachers to regard seriously the changing mentality of their congregations that prefer the egalitarian images of God (*cf.* EJ Kim 1999:22). Thus, Korean preachers need to consider the contemporary social and cultural atmosphere in which they communicate.

In addition, these moralistic images must also be considered in the light of their possible sermonistic effects. According to J Piper (1999:42), "Genuine sorrow over unholiness comes only from a love for holiness. True evangelical contrition, true repentance, must be preceded by a falling in love with God. The preaching that kindles this must constantly portray God as supremely and everlastingly satisfying." For this reason, if Korean

preachers want their audience to have a love for holiness, they must emphatically stress the supreme and abundant grace and love of God in Jesus Christ, rather than some moralistic images that result in a feeling of duty and lay a burden on listeners. Through the sermonic portrayal of God as supremely and everlastingly satisfying and a God of grace, the audience, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, may intensely realize the absence of divine grace in themselves, and start to seek supreme holiness and pleasure in God.

8.5.3 God-images in relation to suffering: Cognitive dogma vs. a hermeneutical scheme

A third significant matter to be discussed, relevant to the usage of God-images in Korean preaching, regards the image of the God who is concerned with suffering. In the Korean sermon analyses, we identified the following God-images: the sovereignty and glory of God in relation to the believer's holiness before God (Park); God being almighty and beneficent to believers (Cho); the Author of history and divine dispensation and the subject of pilgrimage, as well as obedience in silence and suffering (Kwak); the consoling God and the God who wants ethical commitment (Oak); and the compassionate God, who trains His people in suffering, and the God who wants ethical responsibility (Lee).

From these God-images, some dominant trends are identifiable. One is the God who is concerned with consoling and encouraging those who suffer. As shown in 3.2.5.1, the God-images in Cho's sermon serve as an example of a preacher's intention to console those who suffer in poverty, failure, illness, and spiritual anguish. In Kwak's sermon, the image of God as the Author of history and divine dispensation, also portrays the preacher's interpretative struggle to give those who suffer a biblical answer to their existential affairs. As seen not only in Lee and Oak's sermons, but also in most Korean sermons, the image of God who trains His people in suffering is a more active and biblical answer to congregational problems and suffering. From this observation, we could deduce that a dominant image that Korean preaching prefers to use is one of God who is engaged in human suffering, i.e. the One who consoles, encourages, or trains sufferers with a divine purpose.

Then, what is the underlying cause for Korean preachers' emphasis on the God who is concerned with human suffering? We could identify a reason from the Korean collective experience of suffering and from the *Han* spirit. As stated in 1.3, a common ethos that unites Koreans is their experience of suffering, collectively or individually, and their continual struggle to escape from it over many generations (*cf.* JY Lee 1997:77). Facing so many difficulties and such suffering, Korean preachers have felt the need to implement God-images that address these hardships. In addition to the collective experience of

After discussing these pneumatological, linguistic and ecclesial aspects of the preaching of the divine presence, we confirmed the importance of the Christian narrative that offers a homiletical foundation in this regard. In our study, the Christian narrative was understood as a pneumatological and linguistic meeting between the Christian community's identity narrative and the individual's narrative, a meeting in which God's redemptive world is revealed, and His people are invited anew to participate in this world. Based upon this definition, the normative, communal, and hermeneutical functions of the Christian narrative were briefly discussed in relation to our subject of research.

In the light of these normative understandings, a strategic, homiletical suggestion as regards Korean preaching was put forth. The first focus was on the spiritual and emotional impression as emphasized in Korean preaching, and a transformative hermeneutical frame was alternatively suggested. Secondly, individual and apolitical images in Korean preaching were criticized, and communal and socio-political images were alternatively emphasized. Lastly, the matter of God-images and suffering were addressed, and we identified the homiletical importance of a transformative hermeneutical scheme to guide Korean Christians on how to respond appropriately to suffering. In these discussions, we not only examined the linguistic and ecclesial aspects of the preaching of the divine presence, but also underlined the homiletical necessity that our subject should be addressed within a sound hermeneutical frame. This is the subject to be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter nine

The use of Scriptures in the preaching of the divine presence

9.1 Introduction

In this chapter, we shall establish a normative foundation for the homiletical necessity that the voice of the Bible should be heard when preaching the divine presence, and we shall make some strategic suggestions on this subject, especially in view of Korean preaching. As established in 1.5.1.1, the Bible is a crucial component in constituting the sermonic matrix for preaching the presence of God. Without the voice of the biblical text, preaching the divine presence as the true Word of God is totally impossible and unthinkable. In spite of this obvious homiletical principle, contemporary preaching suffers from a biblical silence in preaching (Brueggemann 1989:8; Miller 1996:90).

When we try to recover the Bible's authority and voice in preaching, we face the following related questions. Firstly, wherein lies the authoritative nature and function of the Bible in preaching? Given the divine revelation given in the Bible, how does this influence our view on preaching as an act that proclaims God's presence? Here, one of the author's presuppositions regarding preaching is that, in reading the Bible, Christian readers indeed encounter God and listen to His Word. Secondly, this encounter with God is the ultimate purpose of the hermeneutical act of seeking the meaning of a text. Given the divine encounter between God and the reader, this hermeneutical act of finding God in the biblical text also raises further hermeneutical questions concerning the very act of reading the Bible, encountering God, and listening to His voice in the Bible. Thirdly, this subject also raises the question of an interpretative procedure for sermon preparation. If preachers read the Bible with a view to prepare their sermons, which interpretative procedure should they follow? In order to examine these questions, we shall discuss the following three subjects: the Bible as the Word of God, the hermeneutical dimension in encountering God in the Bible, and the preachers' way of reading the Bible when they prepare their sermons. After examining these questions and related subjects, a few strategic suggestions that concern the homiletical study of the Bible in Korean preaching will be added.

9.2 The Bible as the Word of God

When we discuss the authority and function of the Bible, an important point of departure for this discussion can be attained from the close relationship between the preacher's view of the Bible and its influence on preaching. According to Larsen (1989:29), "It is clear that what we believe about the Bible will determine how we shall approach the preaching of the

Bible.” If preachers do not admit the divine authority of the Bible as the revelation of God, they will ignore its absolute authority in such a way as to replace it with their own message that might be considered suitable for the audience. Thus, an appropriate homiletical view of the Bible as the Word of God is crucial for the true Word of God to be proclaimed in preaching. In our study, the divine nature of the Bible will be discussed mainly in the light of the following three considerations: the Bible that mediates God’s name and the Spirit; the sacramental function of the Bible; the Bible that mediates God’s Word, Jesus Christ.

9.2.1 The Bible that mediates God’s name and the Spirit

Without the Bible as the Word of God, the great homiletical commission to preach the Word of God cannot be accomplished and ends in preaching mere human words. Preaching can sustain its divine nature only through the Bible, as the Word of God (*cf.* Larsen 1992:22; PS Wilson 1995:40).

Then, what does this homiletical presupposition of the Bible, as the Word of God, imply for our discussion of preaching the divine presence? The following two elements can be mentioned: the Bible as the book of God’s name and the Bible as the book to mediate the Holy Spirit. Firstly, when the Bible is understood as the book of God’s Name, preaching that intends to be firmly based upon the Bible, may naturally be understood in terms of the naming of God. In the previous chapter (8.2) we noted that the human impossibility to preach the Word of God can be overcome by a homiletical perspective of preaching as the naming of God. As discussed in 8.2.2, to preach is to pronounce and hallow God’s name with the aid of the Holy Spirit. This understanding of preaching, as the naming of God, can be enhanced by the view of the Bible as the book of God’s name. According to Bohren (1980:110), “It is the Bible that transmits, translates, and explicates the name of God. So the Bible is indispensable for the legitimation of preaching as the naming of God.” Thus, when we try to overcome the human impossibility to preach the Word of God, the Bible itself, as the book of God’s name, legitimates preaching that strives to name God through the working of the Spirit. Without the Bible that mediates God and His name, indeed in his name, preaching is totally impossible. When the name of God, as transmitted and explicated in the Bible, is introduced and called out correctly in preaching, we could say that this preaching is biblically legitimate in the sense that the Word of God reveals Himself.

Secondly, the Bible, as the Word of God, should also be understood as the book mediating the Holy Spirit, so that, if preaching is closely related to the Bible, this preaching may also be acknowledged as the Word of God, mediated by the Spirit. According to Bohren (1980:111ff), the Bible can be regarded as a document of the Spirit who offers us divine grace. Just as the Holy Spirit was involved in the writing of the Bible (inspiration), so the

Spirit is also involved in the reading of it (illumination). Thus, the confession that the Spirit inspired the Bible further affirms the divine nature of preaching, at least if this preaching is legitimized by the Spirit whom the Bible mediates. To summarize then: the Bible, which must be understood as a book for mediating God's name as well as the Spirit, offers a crucial homiletical foundation for preaching which intends mediating God's presence.

9.2.2 The sacramental function of the Bible

The sacramental view on the Bible is closely linked to what we have said so far about the Bible as the Word of God and as mediator of God's name and Holy Spirit. It also sheds a relevant light on our subject of preaching the divine presence. What does the sacramental view entail? As examined before (8.2.2), the pneumatological dimension of preaching is fulfilled when God's name is called out and the Spirit works in such a way as to enlighten the audience about the identity of this named God. According to Louw (1998:378), the sacramental stance on the Bible views the biblical term, 'the Word of God' as "the communicative event and encounter with the Gospel." Louw points out that the Bible, as the Word of God, cannot be entrapped as a mere ethical imperative that is supposed to be extracted in order to build a bridge between the Bible and the contemporary context. For Louw (1998:378), 'Word' is more comprehensive than the biblical text; the Bible itself provides the link between the Sender and hearer, as the gift of God Himself:

[The Word of God] refers to the presence and faithfulness of God, as this is related to humankind by means of a covenantal encounter established by the Spirit (the pneumatological mode of the Word). It also refers to both *revelation* (transcendence) and to *communication* (God's condescendence and embodiment through human actions in history). It suggests what Stone (1988:56) calls the four key considerations: 'the word of God' is God's revelation to humanity, it establishes and extends relationship, it is the mode of communication of the faith, and it is expressed both verbally (as spoken or written) and visibly (as act).' 'Sacramental' therefore denotes a unique communication, which includes historical text, tradition, context and human involvement. Sacramental also refers to both a metaphorical dimension; the verbal mode; and a symbolic dimension; the visible mode.

When we view the Bible as the Word of God in a sacramental perspective, our understanding of the Biblical message as a religious and ethical collection of truths that must be extracted in order to build a bridge between the biblical text and contemporary context is transcended in such a way that we now view the Bible as the covenantal fulfilment of God's promise to give us His name forever, and as the practical communicative mediation of God's name and of the Spirit to His people.

Furthermore, the sacramental view of the Bible expands our ways of dealing with the Bible.

According to Saint Augustine, sacrament is the visible form of the invisible divine grace. Furthermore, he distinguished between the visible sacrament and its power. Apart from its invisible grace, the sacrament has no power of its own; only this invisible power or force can give it effect (White 1983:152-153). When we understand the Bible as sacrament, this Augustinian view points to the Bible's two natures: as a human book and as the Word of God, and this paradoxical nature of the Bible can acquire validity corresponding to both aspects. To begin with, the Bible is like any other book in that it is the product of particular circumstances, written by particular people in specific communicative frames, so that specific interpretative methods must be considered in order to acquire the relevant meaning of specific texts. However, it is unlike any other book in that it has been, and is, believed to be the Word of God that cannot be explained by fixed human interpretative tools. In order to explicate the transcendental dimension of the Bible as understood in sacramental terms, Schneiders (1991:42) turns to Gadamer's distinction between an art object and a work of art as follows:

An art object is a physical entity like a statue, a painting, a musical score, or the script of a play. The art object is only truly a work of art when it is being contemplated, heard, or played. In other words, whereas the art object has continuous existence as a physical entity, the work of art has an intermittent mode of being. It is actualized in the act of appreciation It perdures as a possibility inherent in the object, and this is what makes the object itself valuable. The object not only grounds the possibility of existence of the work of art but stabilizes its meaning in such a way that each valid actualization is related to every other valid actualization in recognizable ways.

Just as Augustine distinguishes between the visible sacrament itself and its invisible power, so we can distinguish between the visible biblical text itself and the Bible's invisible transcendental dimension, recognizable in the light of the work of the Spirit. When we approach the Bible as the Word of God in this way, the biblical text can be understood as a visible art object and stable physical entity that has continuous existence. But the Bible is also an invisible work of art, which means that the sacrament of the Word of God must come into being by actualization, which occurs through reading with the aid of the Spirit. As a sacramental verbal sign, the biblical text opens a unique vision of God's face (Cilliers 2001). Thus, the importance of the text, as a physical entity, is precisely that it grounds the possibility of future actualizations of the Word of God.

When we understand the Bible in a sacramental perspective, the following two forms of distorted use of the Bible are identifiable: an ethical distillation of the Biblical text and a magical idolization of the sacramental Bible. Firstly, in the context of preaching and pastoral care, the Bible may be used merely as an ethical imperative. As implied before, this

is the danger that concerns Louw (1998:378): "There is a real danger that the text and hearer are separated in such a way that Scripture is used merely as an ethical imperative. When Scripture is used in this way, it implies that ethical actions should bridge the gap between hearer and the scriptural text." For Louw, this way of dealing with the Bible leads to Christ being held forth as an example to be followed, and it establishes a Christian anthropology directly upon Christology, using Christ as an example for human behavior, and diminishing the uniqueness of Christ's conciliatory work for salvation (1998:170,378). However, as pointed out already, the sacramental view of the Bible provides a better possibility for finding a relevant mediating link between biblical text and context.

On the opposite side of this extreme ethical and imperative distortion of the Bible, we identified another possible distorted use of the Bible, that is, to make a magical idol of the sacramental Bible. Some mystical power and veneration is invested with mystical expectation from the Bible, in isolation from the specific interpretative frameworks within which the reality of the Word of God became actualized (Schneiders 1991:43). Thus, people tend to ignore the detailed interpretative procedure that is, in their minds, not supposed to accompany such a holy object, and just consider the Bible as a kind of mystical springboard to propel them to transcendental and mystical enlightenment. In this treatment, the Bible no longer functions as a linguistic reality, dependent on the reader's interpretative and meditative work. This is, however, exactly what the sacramental view of the Bible suggests: through sound interpretative work, the Word of God is actualized in a concrete context.

9.2.3 The Bible that mediates God's Word, Jesus Christ

In the light of the above two distorted uses of the Bible, we must ask the following question: If we are to understand the Bible in a sacramental perspective, then, what does this perspective imply for our study? And also: what does this entail for our methods of reading the Bible? These questions will be answered by examining the following two subjects: the Bible presenting God and His salvational world, and the Christocentricity of preaching.

9.2.3.1 The Bible presenting God and His salvational world

As seen so far, the Bible cannot be read with the mere purpose of extracting certain ethical and dogmatic contents. Because the Bible, with its sacramental dimension, mediates God's name and identity, a biblical foundation of preaching should also take this sacramental dimension of the Bible into account. Given the sacramental dimension of the Bible, preachers should bear in mind that they must not preach the Bible itself, nor preach about God as mentioned in the Bible. The preacher should rather preach what the Bible mediates,

i.e. God and His Name as encountered in the Bible. Thus, "What the preacher should preach is not so much the biblical text as God's name" as sacramentally mediated in the Bible (Bohren 1980:110). In the same vein, agreeing with Barth, Theissen (1994:30) also rightly insists, "The sermon is from the Bible, not about it."

By considering the functions of the Christian narrative, this can further enlighten the homiletical meaning of 'preaching from the Bible.' As discussed in 8.4.1, an important function of the Christian narrative is to open up God's world as mediated in the Bible. Because the Bible functions in such a way as to mediate God's identity and His world to the readers, when the Bible is preached, this act of preaching cannot be a mere preaching 'of the Bible itself.' The Bible should rather be preached in such a way as to witness God's identity and His salvational world, as mediated in the Bible, and should invite the audience into this world. In this sense, the sermon cannot be 'about the Bible'; it should rather preach God as mediated 'from the Bible.'

9.2.3.2 The Christocentricity of preaching

Closely related to the function of the Bible to mediate God's name and His world is the constitutive power of the biblical narrative to portray Jesus Christ's identity. As discussed in 8.4.1, the Bible, especially the New Testament and the biblical narrative, portrays the unique and unsubstitutable identity of Jesus Christ to the readers. If we read the Bible, with the sacramental view of mediating God's identity and His name in mind, and, taking it a step further, if we read the Bible expecting a revelation concerning the identity of Jesus Christ, the result of such interpretative reading cannot but engender a corresponding mode of preaching, i.e. Christocentric preaching.

Since the time of the Reformers, such as Martin Luther and John Calvin, the homiletical importance of Christocentricity in preaching has been examined by several homileticians, for example, Dietrich Bonhoeffer (Fant 1975), David Buttrick (1988), Sidney Greidanus (1988:118ff), David Larsen (1992:157-169), and Charles Campbell (1997:189ff). In our study, we need not repeat every discussion on this subject as this matter teems with detailed interpretative questions, such as the interpretative relationship between the Old and the New Testament, the textual legitimization of Christological interpretation, and the interpretative legitimization and ethical responsibility of Christocentric preaching in relation to the audience's socio-political context. With the limitation of our study in mind, we shall briefly view the following two basic homiletical statements in connection with the Christocentricity of preaching.

Firstly, Christocentric preaching should not be confused with Christological preaching. In a

sense, Larsen (1992:163) rightly insists, "The Christian proclaimer, whether preaching from the OT or the NT, must present Christ as the ultimate frame of reference." However, he seems to misunderstand this Christocentricity of preaching mainly in the light of the Christological emphasis in preaching, as he understands "all biblical preaching in terms of doctrinal preaching", in other words to contain doctrines about Jesus Christ (1992:164ff). But Christocentric preaching should be more than Christological preaching, because even preaching that, indeed, contains doctrines about Jesus Christ may lack the mediation of His identity to the audience. No matter what text the preacher preaches, no matter what content dominates a sermon, preaching should do more than inform the audience of the identity of Jesus Christ; it should mediate His unsubstitutable identity and induce the audience to experience a real encounter with Him. This is more than some static doctrinal presentation of Jesus Christ. It rather starts from a biblical narrative to portray Jesus Christ's identity, but also invokes the communal prayer to seek the Holy Spirit to mediate the true identity of Jesus in such a way as to build and nurture His Body in His church.

Secondly, Christocentric preaching should go beyond a linguistic presentation of a symbolic figure for reflection in the audience's collective consciousness. In this regard, I disagree with Buttrick. In connection with Christocentric preaching, Buttrick (1988:72) suggests, "when we preach Jesus Christ, we preach him as a human story, as a character in the larger story of God and humanity." For him, in preaching, this character of Jesus Christ is symbolic and reflective. Thus, "the language of preaching looks through a symbolic Christ into the 'heart' of God and then, by reflection, stares into our own souls standing before the mercy that Christ discloses" (1988:77). Through this symbolic and reflective language in preaching, Buttrick tries to "draw together humanity and divinity into one intricate image" (1988:78).

However what he misses in this emphasis on a symbolic and reflective presentation of Jesus, is the constitutive force of Christocentric preaching in a specific socio-political sphere. Jesus Christ's identity should not be confined to the audience's mental consciousness; it should rather be embodied further in the church through the presence and action of the Spirit. This is one of the aspects that Charles Campbell (1997:225) emphasizes when he criticizes contemporary narrative preaching that seems to be satisfied with the linguistic presentation of Jesus Christ's figure only. For him, Jesus' presence and action in the world should be preached in such a way as to be embodied in the church through the presence and action of the Spirit. Thus, Christocentric preaching should move "beyond individual, experiential language events to the building up of the church as a people who embody and witness to Jesus Christ's indirect 'presence' and thereby God's reign in the world" (1997:228). A more detailed discussion of the ecclesial embodiment of Christocentric

preaching can be found in chapter eleven where we speak about the function of the congregation when preaching the divine presence.

9.3 The hermeneutical frame of the God-human encounter in reading the Bible

Thus far, we have discussed the divine nature of the Bible mainly in the light of the following three aspects: the Bible that mediates God's name and the Spirit; the sacramental function of the Bible; and the Bible that mediates God's Word, Jesus Christ. By examining these themes, we confirmed that the Bible, viewed in a sacramental perspective, is a book of verbal signs that mediate God's name and His unique identity in such a way as to bring the reader into a God-human encounter. This raises the question: With what hermeneutical frame should Christians read the Bible in order to have an encounter with God, even during this act of reading? We now tend to this question.

In order to answer this question, we must first discuss the following three general dimensions of the hermeneutical act: explanation, understanding, and assessment. From this discussion, we shall point out that the 'God-human encounter' is an important interpretative purpose for reading the Bible. Secondly, based upon this confirmation, a possible hermeneutical frame of the God-human encounter will be discussed in accordance with the three hermeneutical procedures in Riebert's metaphoric preaching (orientation – disorientation – reorientation). Thirdly, from these procedures, a possible hermeneutical frame for a God-human encounter will be suggested relative to the reading act of the Bible.

9.3.1 Three dimensions of the hermeneutical act

As generally accepted, the word "hermeneutic" could suggest "the theory of interpretation" or especially "the doctrine of the exposition of Scripture" (Jeanrond 1994:1; Kaiser *et al* 1994:15). Here we cannot examine the full theory of hermeneutics in detail, as this might go beyond our study limitation. However, it will be helpful to discuss briefly some general aspects of the hermeneutical activity. Based upon this discussion, we can establish a helpful point of departure for an appropriate interpretative frame for reading the Bible.

9.3.1.1 Explanation and understanding in the hermeneutical act

When we seek to understand the text, or any language, this interpretative work does not presuppose the text, or any language, as the real object of interpretation. That is why all theorists of hermeneutics, from Schleiermacher (*cf.* Jeanrond 1994:49) to Paul Ricoeur (1976:71ff; Jeanrond 1994:72), generally divide the dimensions of interpretation into explanation and understanding, both of which are necessary for the interpretation of texts. To begin with, the dimension of explanation concerns objective description subordinated

fully to the general interpretative principles. Without the explanatory dimension, the interpretation work cannot but end with a subjective appropriation of the meaning. Thus, the interpretative process should follow objective interpretative principles, based upon which an objective description will take place. The text, the language, and the word - Word, in this case - could be the object of interpretation. Thus, in a superficial view, by means of interpretation, an understanding of the meaning of text seems to be possible.

However, the text, or the language itself, cannot be the final object of interpretation. The text, or the word, is rather supposed to have a hermeneutical function to mediate the ultimate understanding of the meaning. The word opens up and mediates understanding, i.e. it engenders understanding. In this vein, Ebeling (1963:305ff) rightly insists that "the primary phenomenon in the realm of understanding is not understanding *of* language, but understanding *through* language." Thus, our interpretation should go beyond an objective description as an explanatory dimension of the word, the text, and the language, and aim at producing an understanding of sense. The dimension of understanding accomplishes the practical purpose of the hermeneutical act.

9.3.1.2 Assessment in the hermeneutical act

In addition to both explanation and understanding, contemporary hermeneutics claims the need for a dimension of critical assessment, since the dimension of understanding, as the ultimate purpose of the hermeneutical act, can be affected by the interpreter's possible distortion or bias (Jeanrond 1994:116ff). Earlier, many scholars believed that interpreters could suspend their values and prejudices, and distil the pure meaning of a text. But, in an impressive essay, *Is exegesis without presuppositions possible?* Rudolf Bultmann (1960:289ff) proved that such exegesis without presuppositions is impossible. According to Allen (1988:173), more recent writers put greater emphasis on the ways in which interpreters' political, economic, social and theological positions function as vested interests that shade the way in which they read a biblical text and the way in which they understand the Gospel. Thus, according to Brueggemann (1988:130), listening to the text and its interpretation is always combined with the interpreter's vested interest. Thus, over time, we select the mode and substance of interpretation that we want to hear, even join or avoid certain churches in order to find a textual interpretation congruent with our vested interests that we can receive, hear, and to which we can respond. In particular, interpreters will often select biblical texts in such a way as to protect their own positions in society.

For this reason, an act of interpretation which claims to have fully interpreted the text or any language, yet, in reality has either only interpreted a section of a text outside of its textual context, or used the text, or fragments of it, in order only to legitimate the

interpreter's own thoughts, or to promote the interpreter's vested interest, must be considered as fraudulent. This human limitation, inherent in all interpretative activities, is the cause of the need for a dimension of assessment in every interpretative act, and this assessment warns the interpreter against any form of unreasonable hope of grasping completely the object of interpretation. Because interpreters' vested interests inevitably become lenses through which interpretation takes place, it is important that they be aware of these lenses in the hermeneutical act (Buttrick 1987:280; Allen in Van Seters [ed] 1988:173; Allen [eds] 1997:68). Through this critical assessment, both the explanatory dimension for an objective description and the dimension of understanding can avoid the naïve hope that, if the methodological principle is perfect, then the interpreter would arrive at the pure and true meaning of the text.

Thus far, we have examined three essential dimensions in all acts of interpretation: explanation, understanding and assessment. The dimension of explanation concerns the objective description of the word, text, or language, based upon general interpretation principles, without which the interpretation may end in a subjective appropriation of the meaning. Yet, this explanatory dimension should be complemented by the dimension of understanding, through which the ultimate meaning of the text, the final purpose of the interpretation, can be acquired by a transformative encounter with each other. In addition, critical assessment, as the ethical dimension of the hermeneutical act, underlines the need for critical reflection of the interpreter's own possible distortions, bias and failure in the interpretative act. Through this assessment, a transformative encounter, as the ultimate purpose of the hermeneutical activity, takes the shape of the reflected critical transformative encounter. At this stage, we must ask another question: What do we mean by "understanding by means of a hermeneutical act"? This question will be answered by attending to the following two subjects: the transformative encounter and a socially acquired ability.

9.3.1.3 What is understanding in the hermeneutical act?

As a kind of epistemological act in the interpretational activity, understanding is more than just knowledge of information, or answering the given question. According to Stroup (1981:202), the process of understanding is not simply a matter of mediation and self-discovery, but an active event, in which the individual stands in relation to an "other." Thus, understanding can be considered as a kind of encounter with another. Through understanding the meaning of a text, or word, one may encounter the other. Moreover, this encounter in understanding causes a transformation of the subject. As rightly pointed out by Hall (1986:91-2), even a little comprehension can open us to alternatives to the status quo.

It intends to change not only our comprehension of the world, but our way of being in it – and also its way of being. Thus, understanding something is already “to enter the realm of transformation.” (Hall 1986:91-2)

Another significant test of understanding is whether a person can engage in the activity that describes understanding. Thus, understanding refers not only to an event of encounter in which transformation of the subject takes place, but also to a facility, something that a person is able to do, something about specific activities in a specific social group. For example, a person may memorize the rules of a game, (e.g. baseball), but knowing the rules of a game does not necessarily mean that one understands how to play the game with team mates. Here, an important criterion of understanding is not whether one knows the proper answers to questions, for example about games, but whether one is able to engage in the real activity of the game in a specific social group.

Wittgenstein’s perspective of language enhances the description of understanding in terms of a social and contextual engagement. For Wittgenstein, the meaning of language is located at its use or its function in the context of a particular activity. Thus, the use of language is similar to playing a game. One understands the meaning of a word or a language when one is able to use it, to employ it appropriately within a specific social group. “Here the term ‘language game’ is meant to bring into prominence the fact that the speaking of language is part of an activity, or of a form of life” (Wittgenstein 1967:11, No 23).

In conclusion, we can establish an appropriate starting point for the dimension of understanding in respect of both a transformative encounter as well as a socially acquired ability. Both are necessary for a full description of understanding. On the one hand, understanding is an acquired skill. To understand is to be able to enact concepts. On the other hand, this facility is learned in a social and communal event, in the encounter that takes place between different horizons of interpretation.

9.3.2 A hermeneutical procedure of the God-human encounter

Based upon the above three essential dimensions of the interpretative act, we now need to turn our attention specifically to a possible hermeneutical procedure of the God-human encounter in reading the Bible. As starting point, Riebert’s three metaphoric processes will be discussed. In Riebert’s investigation, an important question is: What happens to those who listen to metaphoric preaching? At first glance, this discussion might seem irrelevant to our search for a proper understanding about the God-human encounter in the reading of the Bible. However, we can draw some relevant implications for the hermeneutical act of the

God-human encounter from this discussion, in that it deals with the hermeneutical phases that those who have a transformative encounter with the Word of God go through.

9.3.2.1 Orientation, disorientation, and reorientation in Riegert's metaphoric process

In his book, *Imaginative shock: Preaching and metaphor*, Riegert (1990) defines the nature of preaching as a metaphoric process that is brought about by the imaginative shock of metaphor. According to Riegert (1990:12), metaphors place a known alongside an unknown, and between these, reality is redescribed so that new possibilities for perception, understanding, and action become available. In this hermeneutical work, Riegert (1990:72-74) identifies three phases of the metaphoric process, which are not necessarily sequential, but more than likely happen simultaneously.

Orientation is the first phase of the metaphoric process, i.e. the tacit acceptance of reality. This is the speaker and hearer's common reference - the way things are, which may be tragic, satisfactory, dismal, or business-as-usual. In the way that metaphor works with the listener, for Riegert (1990:132), this orientating phase is important since this phase establishes an appropriate existential ground, based upon which the real life of the people of God can be reinterpreted in the light of theology, or the Word of God. Interpreting life theologically intends to present life itself as it is, and to assume that it is the real arena in which God is at work. When life is illuminated by theology we can expect something unusual to happen.

According to Crossan (1975:86; cf. Riegert 1990:103), the biblical parable works similarly to the metaphoric process. Beginning in the conventional world, the concrete and very ordinary details of parables draw hearers deeply into the conventional world with all its conventional standards, conventional values and, thus, conventional expectations, as if everything will remain the same as they were. With the orientation of the conventional world in the consciousness of the hearer, the biblical parable leads the hearer, incognito, into the next abrupt shock.

The second phase of the metaphoric process is disorientation (Riegert 1990:72,104). Here usual things cease being the way they were. Reality, as it is assumed to be, breaks down. The key occurrence in the phase of disorientation is the shift of the reference. As the metaphor runs, a common reference that was established within the common conventional world comes to be countered by the sudden new reference. Now it is not just a case of having lost the conventional ground, but of suddenly being forced to suspend the way in which the communication by metaphor is being held; an unforeseen and new reference is proposed. In the face of this new reference that was abruptly presented, the conventional

Bible. Because this hermeneutical act of recognizing God's character and identity in the God-human encounter can acquire its significance only in connection with the recognition of a reader's present real life, the hermeneutical process of the God-human encounter should involve a sincere confrontation with the believer's present real life. Without connection with the present reality of Christian life, this God-human encounter cannot but end in a meaningless cognitive assent to certain dogmas or the futile acceptance of propositions about God.

In a similar vein, Louw (1998:239) points out the fact that, as a result of the eschatological tension between the 'already' and the 'not yet,' the recognition of divine grace generates a struggle in the believer. What he means by this tension is that the reading of the Bible motivates readers to face the present reality of Christian life, which contains the strange tension brought on by the gap between the identity of God, who has promised 'Immanuel,' and His seemingly painful absence in Christians' real life. Because the recognition of God's identity and character in the Bible contrasts with the present reality of Christian life, the Christian reader cannot help questioning the reason for this contrast, i.e. the strange tension between God's 'already' and humans' 'not yet.'

Secondly, besides recognizing the strange present reality of Christian life, the hermeneutical process of the God-human encounter in reading the Bible strives to establish an alternative evangelical infrastructure that helps to reconstruct the present reality. Like the phase of disorientation in Riegert's metaphoric process, this second phase in the God-human encounter is concomitant to the collision of two worlds, i.e. the world of God disclosed in the biblical narrative, and the conventional world, to which Christian readers have easily adapted. Through this collision, the previous conventional reality collapses, and an alternative new infrastructure is reconstructed. Just like the exilic Israel, facing the tension of the divine presence and absence, had to relinquish their previous conventional reality, and accept the new reality that God suggested, the hermeneutical struggle caused by the tension of the God-human relationship, which includes the paradoxical contrast between the promise of the divine presence and the reality of the seemingly absence of the divine in the real Christian life, invites one to re-interpret and reconfigure your reality in the light of God's promises.

Thirdly, the hermeneutical act of the God-human encounter therefore leads the reader to react appropriately to this reconstructed awareness of the God-human encounter in the world. If the hermeneutical act of this encounter does not produce an appropriate reaction, it remains a meaningless cognitive event. Just like Israel, in exile in Babylon, was invited to celebrate and practise the peculiar mode of the God-human encounter, i.e. the presence-of-

the-divine in-absence, so the Christian reader is also invited - after experiencing a new reality of the divine presence - to celebrate, enact, and further practise the reconstructed reality of a new encounter with God in the world, beyond the conventional way of celebrating the God-human encounter. This reaction to a new God-human encounter could be formulated in terms of both the ecclesial confession and celebration of the peculiar mode of a divine presence in absence, and obedient discipleship to follow in the footsteps of a God who moves into unexpected places. In this sense, the hermeneutical act of the God-human encounter, also brought about by reading the Bible, cannot remain a cognitive understanding about God; it should rather involve an ecclesial response in the world, where God wants to manifest His revelatory encounter with humanity.

9.4 The preacher's way of reading the Bible for sermon preparation

Thus far, we have discussed the Bible as the Word of God mainly from a sacramental perspective, and confirmed that the Bible is the book that mediates God's name and His true identity to the reader. And, in addition to the general three hermeneutical dimensions of explanation, understanding, and assessment, a possible hermeneutical frame for the God-human encounter was examined, based upon Riebert's metaphorical process. From these two discussions, we now turn to a more practical discussion of the preacher's way of reading the Bible in relation to sermon preparation. When preachers want to read the Bible with the purpose of preaching the divine presence, then they need to answer the following questions: If they are supposed to proclaim the presence of the God of the Bible, how can the gap between the Bible and the contemporary context be bridged? And, what is the exegetical prerequisite that supports this interpretative purpose? In what way should preachers proceed with the interpretation of the Bible, especially in relation to sermon preparation? In order to answer these questions, we shall examine the following two relevant subjects: the necessity to co-relate the historical biblical text with the present context; and prayerful exegesis and *Lectio Divina*.

9.4.1 The sermonic necessity to co-relate the historical text with the present context

As mentioned above, when the preacher reads the Bible with the purpose of proclaiming the divine presence, immediate questions arise: How can the eternal Word of God in the Bible be relevant to the present audience's context; in other words, how can the gap between the Bible and context can be bridged? How can the Bible that was written in the past, now speak to us in the present? Many theologians have discussed this homiletical gap between the eternal Word of the Bible and the contemporary context. In order to solve these questions, many hermeneutical frames have been being suggested and examined, for instance the bridge concept (John Stott 1981; Wilson 1995:164-171); a deductive frame of

human experience (Craddock 1971:124-125); a co-relational method of the human experience and culture (Rice 1980:55-73); double hermeneutics of being saved in the world (Buttrick 1987:261); human imagination (Green 1989:34,40-42; Tisdale 1992:185-194); the identification and vicarious experience (Mitchell 1990:50ff); a mutual critical correlation of Christian vision and experience (Allen [eds] 1997:66,77); and intratextuality and the church (C Campbell 1997). In our study, we shall examine briefly some homiletical stances on this matter, such as Barthian preaching that emphasizes the eternal fixed truth, Bultmann's existential preaching that emphasizes the adaptability of the truth to the contemporary human being, the historical-critical approach that stresses the original meaning by constructing a first-century world, and Buttrick's double structure of consciousness that consider the double aspect of salvation.

First, while considering the liberal theological influence on the European church of the early 20th century, Barth, among others, minimized this homiletical gap, and held that we can share with biblical authors their witness of Christ without much concern for features of their worldview that disagree with ours, because both people in the past and present are equally sinful by nature, and thus need God's grace that He offers beyond the time gulf (Beardslee 1989:38ff).

Acknowledging the naivety of the direct correlational frame implied in the Barthian presupposition of the Word of God, and motivated by the concern about how the Christian message can be intelligible and relevant to the modern mind, Bultmann suggests a sharp distinction between the existential meaning of what is said and the mythological conceptuality within which it is said. Thus the preacher's task is to disclose the existential significance of the biblical message while freeing the audience from any commitment to the mythology in the Bible. Central to Bultmann's efforts at demythologizing and reinterpreting the New Testament in existential terms is the refusal to speak of God in 'objectifying terms' (MA Johnson 1994:63). As a result, in this scheme, the thought world generated by modern science is as normative for the Christian as it is for anyone else; the Gospel's claim and challenge cannot but be suffocated within that thought world (Buttrick 1987:267; Beardslee 1989:38ff).

From another direction, the historical-critical approach has also suggested an interpretative way to bridge the two worlds. This approach supposes that if the reader can reconstruct a 'first-century world' in which the biblical texts were written, the contemporary reader might acquire the original meaning of the text. In fact, this approach seemed likely to bring forth abundant understanding of the biblical worldview in which the Bible was written and canonized. However, if we examine this approach, then we have to admit that an imaginary

biblical world is reconstructed “within a twentieth-century language-consciousness as an act of historical imagination” (Buttrick 1987:265). Moreover, our quest for interpretative relevance between the two worlds cannot but face the fact that “a bag full of original meaning may not help much in the living of life today” because our question is not so much, what did the text mean? but, what does the text prompt us to preach now? (cf. 1987:273).

Being aware of the hermeneutical failure to bridge the gulf between the two worlds, Buttrick (1987:278) suggests that, “the interpretative relevance of two worlds may be overcome when the biblical text, written by a double consciousness, must be read by double consciousness – a consciousness of being saved by God and a consciousness of being in the world.” For him, “the biblical texts speaks to double consciousness: A consciousness of being-saved that views the world, and a human worldly consciousness startled by being-saved” (1987:277). Thus, while first-century consciousness is quite different from 20th-century consciousness, and the shape of our world may change, double consciousness of being saved in the world is unchanging, both in the biblical text and in the contemporary Christian reader’s consciousness. Moreover, while the original meaning that might be allegedly acquired by the artificial co-relational approach cannot but either fail to reflect the contemporary context into the original meaning of the biblical text, or degrade the biblical text for contemporary significance, this approach that considers the double consciousness both of the text and the reader allows the interpreter to do justice to both the original intention of the text relevant to the present reader and the variables of two worlds.¹⁰

Buttrick’s perspective of the double structure in the hermeneutical consciousness of being saved in the world offers an interesting answer for the interpretative question of how to bridge the two worlds of the Bible and the contemporary reader. However, as pointed out before, the Bible is more than a book containing the double consciousness of being saved in the world; it is a book that mediates the identity and world of God, and thus brings a God-human encounter to the reader with the aid of the Holy Spirit’s present work. Thus, in order for the preacher to minister the Bible with this interpretative goal of a God-human encounter and, more especially, with the sermonic purpose of proclaiming the divine presence in mind, we need to consider the additional exegetical dimension of reading the Bible: reading it meditatively and prayerfully.

9.4.2 Prayerful exegesis and *Lectio Divina*

When the preacher reads the Bible with the purpose of proclaiming the divine presence in

¹⁰ WD Thompson (1981:78ff) also tries to connect the two worlds by using the following three bridges: human need, God’s salvation, and human response to God.

mind, a (exegetical) prerequisite is that the preacher must first encounter the divine presence in the Bible before he/she enters the pulpit to preach Him. In the practical act of reading the Bible, the preacher first has to experience an encounter with God. Without this initial encounter in the Bible, the preacher's proclamation of the divine presence cannot but end in false and empty words.

In spite of this exegetical prerequisite, another fact that should be understood in the reading act of the Bible is the dilemma that a God-human encounter cannot be acquired by any exegetical methods or skills. Although the preacher, who is supposed to proclaim the divine presence, has to exegete the Bible in such a way as to be led into a God-human encounter, no exegetical method can guarantee that this encounter will take place.¹¹ While experiencing this exegetical paradox, preachers must pray throughout the exegetical procedure that God may reveal His face and utter His Word to His people. This prayer during the exegetical procedure does not imply a retreat from the text. Waiting for His spoken Word, this prayer rather goes hand in hand with the Bible. This is one of the things that *lectio divina* means during the exegesis procedure.

Lectio divina was practiced throughout the Middle Ages, when the written text was cherished before Gutenberg's printing started to spread the printed text (Jabusch 1990:54ff). For medieval Christians, reading was not a casual seeking of informative contents, but "a task that required one's complete attention and involved much more than eyes scanning a page written by hand, in which lips, tongue, face, mind, and so the whole body took an active part" (1990:55-56). Audrey Sorrento defines this as a process through which the reader enters into the mystery of Christ, that is, a living encounter with God, through reading the text slowly, prayerfully, and meditatively (EJ Kim 1999:94).

From this *Lectio divina*, we could conceive a possible exegetical process especially in relation to our subject of preaching the divine presence, since *Lectio divina* offers a comprehensive exegesis process for a God-human encounter during the reading of the Bible. According to Westerhoff (1994:72-74), the process of *Lectio divina* follows the following four steps: *lectio* (reading), *meditatio* (meditation), *oratio* (prayer), and *contemplatio* (contemplation). To begin with, during *lectio* (reading), one reads a text slowly with rapt attention until one is familiar with it. This kind of reading may be difficult at first, especially when the passage is familiar. But reading familiar texts slowly and actively can produce new revelations.

¹¹ Possible exegesis processes in relation to sermon preparation have been conceived by several homiletics: John Stott 1983:211ff; Craddock 1985:99-124; Buttrick 1987:305-317; Long 1989:60ff; PS Wilson 1995:127ff; Greidanus 1999:279ff. However, in our study, we focus on the more fundamental matter of the reading act of the Bible, by examining mainly *Lectio Divina*.

After the initial reading of the text, *meditatio* (meditation) follows. In this second step, readers must enter fully into the text, allow it to engage them completely, and experience it personally, using an active, creative way of thinking with prayer to seek the Holy Spirit's illumination. According to Jabusch *meditatio* consists of applying oneself with attention to this exercise while totally memorizing the text, and in total prayer:

It is what inscribes, so to speak, the sacred text in the body and in the soul. This repeated mastication of the divine words is sometimes described by use of the theme of spiritual nutrition. In this case the vocabulary is borrowed from eating, from digestion, and from the particular form of digestion belonging to ruminants. To meditate is to attach oneself closely to the sentence being recited and weigh all its words in order to sound the depths of their full meaning. It means assimilating the content of a text by means of a kind of mastication which releases its full flavor. All this activity is, necessarily, a prayer, a prayerful reading (Jabusch 1990:56-57).

For Kleinig (1992:81ff), this meditative and patient keeping of the Word deep in the reader's heart is one of the aspects that Luke's gospel, compared to other Gospels, emphasizes in order for the desired fruit of the Word of God to be born in the disciple's heart. For example, Luke 1:38, 2:19 and 2:51, presents Mary, the mother of Jesus, as a model who practised the art of meditation by keeping all of the Words of God in her heart.

In these descriptions of Mary, Luke employs the language of the wisdom tradition with its emphasis on meditation as the permanent retention and constant consideration of God's teaching in the disciple's heart. Her meditation did not focus upon herself or her own experiences, upon her opinions or the opinions of others; it focused on her son Jesus and the Word of God that had been spoken about him and by him. It led her to him as her Savior (2:11), in whom the treasures of God's wisdom were hidden and revealed to her (Kleinig 1992:86).

As mentioned above, this meditative reading involves prayer; thus, it consists of prayerful reading to seek illumination by the Holy Spirit. In *oratio* (prayer), the reader patiently waits for the Word of God that proceeds to break out of His silence (Craddock 1985:55ff). And, since not everyone, but only an obedient and committed person hears this whisper of God, in this prayerful listening the reader is led into dialogic and reflective conversation with God. When a preacher engages in this prayerful conversation with God, this prayer is more than a dialogue between God and the individual preacher alone; the preacher's prayerful conversation with God rather involves a congregational prayer in which the preacher prays representatively.

Lastly, in *contemplatio* (contemplation), the preacher may reflectively understand the specific intention of the Word of God for His people for whose sake the preacher enters the

pulpit. "To do this, we need to empty our consciousness, controlling the mind, give up control, wait patiently, and watch expectantly for God's action in our life" (Westerhoff 1997:74). Through this self-confirmation of the Word, the preacher may overcome his presuppositional interpretations of the Word, and be assured of the Word of God that will proceed to His people in its own accomplishing power.

9.5 The interpretative strategy in Korean preaching

Thus far, we have discussed a normative foundation for the homiletical question how the voice of the Bible should be involved when preaching the divine presence. With this concern in mind, we had a brief look at the following related themes: the divine authority of the Bible, as a book that mediates the presence of God to the Christian reader; the hermeneutical dimension of the God-human encounter; as well as the exegetical dimension of the God-human encounter, especially in relation to *Lectio divina*. Based upon this normative foundation, we shall now make a number of strategic suggestions, especially about an appropriate exegetical approach for Korean preaching.

9.5.1 Exegetical emphasis: The transcendental dimension vs. a sacramental approach

According to JY Lee (1997:67ff), "one of the most distinctive aspects of Korean preaching is the lack of criticism in the expository and doctrinal sermons which are most popular in the Korean church today." This means reading a passage of Scripture and then treating it in a sermon as though it had been directly written with only this specific audience in mind. As a practical reason for this, JY Lee (1997:68) mentions the lack of enough time to consult commentaries or other resources that help Korean preachers to build a sound biblical and exegetical foundation for their sermons.

On the contrary, MJ Lee (1998:10) finds a more fundamental reason for the lack of historical and cultural criticism in Korean sermons in the traditional reading habits of scriptures in the Korean indigenous religions. As mentioned in 1.2.3 and 1.2.4, before the Christian Bible was introduced, Confucian and Buddhist scriptures had long existed in Korea, also in other East Asian countries. In Korean Confucianism, the scriptures, such as the Four Books or the Five Classics, were used as a medium for learning and self-cultivation, and had perennial value and authority for guiding humanity (EJ Kim 1999:78ff). In Zen Buddhism that was dominant in Korea, Buddhist scriptures were considered not as merely the transmitted words of Buddha's teaching, but words "conveying the truths one needs for successful practice toward enlightenment" (1999:81). Before the Christian Bible was introduced, with these venerating attitudes in mind, Korean readers had been searching for the ultimate meaning of the text, going beyond its literal sense. For them, most

important in the reading of the scriptures was a meditative approach to give the readers direct relevant enlightenment (MJ Lee 1998:56). In addition, several exegetical disciplines, such as quiet sitting, repetition, memorizing, meditation and calligraphy were recommended in order to reach this exegetical purpose. These venerating attitudes towards the scriptures and practical ways of reading are seemingly similar to the sacramental perspective on the Christian Bible and even to the *Lectio divina* method of reading the Bible (EJ Kim 1999:95).

However, when Korean Christian readers sustain these traditional reading habits to which they are accustomed, some exegetical problems occur since the traditional exegetical way of reading does not allow an emphasis on the historical and syntactical context of the written text, and overemphasizes the appropriate meaning of the text that is directly meaningful and relevant to the contemporary reader. Thus, according to MJ Lee (1998:57), one of demerits of the Korean way of reading is that it is prone to individual, subjective, and even arbitrary interpretation, since this reading emphasizes mainly the interpreter's own inward enlightenment, ignoring the objective and contextual dimensions of the text. While being aware of this demerit, MJ Lee (1998:56) insists that the Korean Christian's reading of the Bible should be supplemented with a more objective exegesis concomitant to the historical and syntactical examination of the written text. This is an aspect that we considered when we discussed the need for explanation as one of the indispensable dimensions of interpretation. Moreover, the sacramental perspective on the Bible, i.e. both the human and divine dimensions of the Bible, also require a correspondent consideration of both dimensions.

9.5.2 Exegetical norm: The preacher's biased perspective vs. the objective exegetical frame

When we analyzed the five Korean sermons in terms of how the preachers deal with the Scriptures, one of the salient facts revealed was that the preacher's theological emphasis influences the exegetical direction of the sermon, whether regarding the Word of God itself, or the congregation's existential need (*cf.* 7.2). For example, in Park's and Oak's sermons, the main contents and structures follow those of the biblical passages, underlining the preachers' specific view on the authenticity of the Word of God. Through their way of dealing with the Scriptures in their sermons, they indicate their theological emphasis. In a similar way, Cho, Kwak and Lee also deal with the Scriptures in such a way as to reveal their theological emphasis on the congregational need, corresponding with their rhetorical strategies, which they consider as a crucial component of preaching.

In connection with the exegetical prerequisites of the theological perspective in the

interpretation of the Bible, “Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin agreed on the need for a theological reading perspective which would allow the individual reader of the Scriptures to grasp the overarching theological sense of these texts” (Jeanrond 1996:32). Thus, “When we Christians read the Bible as Scripture, we read from a particular slant. God is the focus. We read for what is said about God and us. For the preacher as theology student, the text does not stand fully on its own, independent of the Christian traditions that provide interpretative angles we take to be correct” (S Wilson 1995:136).

However, when any interpretative angle, for example, the kingdom theology, redemptive history, blessing of God in this world, God’s promise for healing, or even mission-focused exegesis, becomes so dominant as to ignore various other interpretative angles in each biblical text, this biased angle is more harmful than helpful both to the interpreter and to the audience. For example, Cho’s interpretative angle of emphasizing God’s blessing in this world is so dominant as to be read into the Bible by this unilateral interpretative approach and to ignore various other theological angles offered by the Scriptures. Moreover, some Korean reading ways are prone to fall into individual and subjective interpretation that emphasizes individual enlightenment. When this subjective interpretation accompanies biased interpretative angles, its negative aftermath will be so serious as to preclude an appropriate proclamation of the Word (*cf.* MJ Lee 1998:57). For this reason, finding an “objective” exegetical frame that emphasizes historical, grammatical, and contextual interpretation is an urgent task for Korean preaching.

9.5.3 Exegetical goal: Individual appropriation versus church nurturing

The third significant exegetical matter in Korean preaching concerns individualistic interpretation that emphasizes an individual appropriation of the meaning of the text. For example, as analysed in 3.2.4, Cho’s way of interpreting the Bible is partially entrapped by his individual appropriation of the texts, in which the biblical meaning is suffocated by the sermonic priority of the congregational needs. This individualistic appropriation of the biblical text has the following two negative aftermaths.

Firstly, it brings about distorted God-images, such as individual, apolitical, and otherworldly images of God, while ignoring other biblical images. When the biblical text is interpreted thus, God-images in preaching are unable to bring about a transformative God-human encounter in the audience’s inner consciousness and practical life, and will be only entrapped within the ideological presuppositions of the church’s vested interests. Thus, as individual and apolitical God-images in Korean preaching were criticized in comparison to the communal and socio-political images, the same exegetical problem can be detected in the Korean preacher’s exegesis, in which the text is interpreted in such a way as to enhance

the vested interests of the individual congregation, ignoring the more transformative power of the voice of the Bible in preaching (Brueggemann 1988:130).

A more serious problem of an individualistic interpretation in Korean preaching was raised when we realized the close relationship between the interpretative activity in preaching and its communal function to nurture the congregation's interpretative consciousness. According to Theissen (1994:40), "Many hermeneutical reflections seem to presuppose only a twofold relationship: understanding and interpretation are seen as relationships between a text and its interpreter. But a third factor is always present (at least potentially): the community for which the interpreter acts." CL Campbell (1997:84) further emphasizes the important function of the community in the interpretation of the Bible as follows: "Christians learn to interpret Scripture not by learning general hermeneutical or literary theories, but by being trained to apply the informal rules and conventions for the use of Scripture that are embodied in the language and practices of the Christian community." Thus, "readers must be trained within the interpretative community to read Scripture rightly" (1997:243).

However, when we examine Korean preaching, it is clear that it is prone to fall into individualistic interpretation, versus the ecclesial function of preaching to train the audience in appropriate Bible interpretation. In the light of our analyses, we realize that healthy church formation is not easily attained when hampered by biased interpretations. If, as a result of a biased interpretation in preaching, the congregation fails to learn how to read the Bible properly, one of the Reformer's catchphrases, 'to hand the Bible back to the layman!' cannot but face serious barriers. For this reason, Bible interpretation in Korean preaching should be developed, not in such a way that only the preacher can draw some transcendental meaning from the text, but rather in such a way as to teach the audience how to read the Bible, and to encourage them to acquire the same fruits through continual reading of the Bible throughout their lives. For the same reason, the creation of an "objective" exegetical frame that was emphasized above (9.5.2) is again one of the urgent tasks for Korean preaching.

9.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, we have examined a normative foundation for the question how the voice of the Bible should be involved when preaching the divine presence, and have made three strategic suggestions in view of the Korean preaching context. Firstly, in connection with the authority and function of the Bible, we stressed that the Bible mediates God's name and Spirit, an act through which the Christian reader may be drawn to God's presence, identity, and world. In addition, the sacramental perspective on the Bible was discussed, not only as

this perspective views the Bible in relation to God's mediation, but also because it is appropriate to guide readers in understanding both the transcendental and imminent dimensions of the Bible. In the light of the Bible mediating God, we also discussed the Christocentricity of preaching, and confirmed that Christocentric preaching should not only mediate the unsubstitutable identity of Jesus Christ, but also induce the audience to experience a practical encounter with Him, and be embodied in nurturing the church.

After discussing this divine authority and function of the Bible, we examined a hermeneutical frame within which an encounter with God could take place through the reading of the Bible. Here, three dimensions of the hermeneutical act, i.e. explanation, understanding, and assessment were discussed, and the following two practical dimensions of text understanding were suggested: a transformative encounter and a socially acquired ability in the community. Based upon this hermeneutical foundation, a possible hermeneutical procedure for the God-human encounter was suggested from Riebert's three metaphoric processes: orientation, disorientation, and reorientation. Lastly, a more practical exegetical dimension was tackled by examining the interpretative bridge between the worlds of the Bible and that of the contemporary reader. Here Buttrick's double structure of the interpretative consciousness of being saved in the world, was suggested as one of the possible alternative methods of overcoming the gap. And, *Lectio divina* was added as a more practical guide for the reading of the Bible.

In the light of these normative understandings of how the voice of the Bible could be heard through an appropriate interpretation, the following three strategic homiletical suggestions were made for Korean preaching. The first focuses on the overemphasis of a transcendental dimension in text interpretation in Korean preaching, while ignoring a more objective and holistic dimension. With this biased exegetical tendency in mind, we pointed out that Korean preaching should pay relevant attention to the historical and syntactical context of the written text. Secondly, we remarked that, in some cases, the preacher's biased theological perspective is so strong that it ignores the text's own exegetical directions. Lastly, in connection with the exegetical goal in Korean preaching, we mentioned that the individual appropriation of the text's meaning is prone, not only to promote distorted God-images, but also to fail to nurture healthy congregations who are able to read the Bible appropriately. As a result of these observations, a more objective exegetical frame that pays attention to the historical, grammatical, and contextual interpretation was alternatively emphasized.

Chapter ten

The role of the preacher in preaching the divine presence

10.1 Introduction

In this chapter, we shall examine a normative foundation for the homiletical question how the role of the preacher should be understood in preaching the divine presence, and make some strategic suggestions on this subject, especially in relation to Korean preaching. When we consider the preacher's homiletical character and function in preaching, the following issues arise: the preacher's place, function, and constitutive consciousness web. We must first ask: Where does the preacher stand if he/she is to proclaim the divine presence to the audience? One of our presuppositions on this matter is that the preacher stands between God and the congregation. With this homiletical presupposition in mind, we must, secondly, examine the preacher's role in respect to the pneumatological mediation of "theonomic reciprocity." Thirdly, we must also examine the preacher's triple sermonic consciousness, all of which constitute an essential sermonic web for preaching the divine presence: consciousness of God (spirituality), of the listener (integrity), and of self (conviction). Based upon these three discussions, we shall furthermore make several strategic suggestions on this subject in connection with Korean preaching.

10.2 The place of the preacher

It is essential that we understand the appropriate place of the preacher in preaching, since "unless we can name that place, we risk misunderstanding who we are and what we are supposed to be doing in the pulpit" (Long 1989:11). When, with the preaching of the divine presence in mind, we draw a virtual line that extends from the audience to God, the place of the preacher should be in the following three areas: close to God, close to the audience, and in-between (God and the audience).

According to Rose (1997:14), "Traditional homiletical theory envisions the preacher as the authority figure whose main duty is to tell people what to believe and why they should believe it." In this theory preachers should also aim to teach God's Word; their very purpose is teaching and exhorting the people from the Word of God. Because this view regards preachers as being responsible for delivering the Word of God to the audience, they are also viewed as close to God but far from the audience. The conviction that, in preaching, God comes and speaks to the audience widens this sermonic gap between audience and preacher. According to Welsh (1974:103), a danger of this high doctrine of preaching, which is prone to be found in the kerygmatic preaching tradition, "is mistaking the preacher's voice for

God's voice." However, when this happens, the sermonic gap between pulpit and pew widens in such a way as to promote pulpit hierarchy and violate the audience's acceptance of the preached message in a contemporary non-hierarchical and egalitarian context.

With these dangers in mind, several contemporary homileticians have reminded us that, "The preacher comes not from God, but from the community to which the audience belongs" (cf. J. Moltmann 1977:303; Wardlaw 1988:61; Long 1989:10ff; McClure 1995:30ff; Rose 1997). "Regardless of where the worship leaders emerge from physically and architecturally, theologically they come from *within* the community of faith and not *to* it from the outside" (Long 1989:10). "When the ministerial identity is anchored essentially in the pew, the preacher stands a better chance to offer an incisive Word from the pulpit" (Wardlaw 1988:61).

However, this identification of preachers with the audience does not mean that, theologically, they remain in the audience; they rather stand apart from the audience in order to utter the Word from God to the audience. Although they are not outside or above the audience, preachers stand a distance from the audience because of their sermonic duty. Thus, this distance that is described as 'in-between' is decisive if preachers wish to render the sermonic duty bestowed on them (Buttrick 1987:251).

When we understand the preacher's place in terms of this in-between, this does not dismiss the homiletical fact that the God-human encounter in preaching, in a sense, takes place based upon the preached biblical text. "The actual mystery of the encounter with God is perhaps more directly connected with the text than with the preacher, but the *place* the text comes to the congregation is the relationship to the preacher" (Van der Geest 1981:63). Thus, when we say that the God-human encounter that happens through biblical texts takes place in-between the preacher and the audience, it also signifies that the audience's relationship with the preacher constitutes a crucial component of the God-human encounter in preaching. This signification also raises a question regarding the role of the preacher when preaching the divine presence: What does the preacher do in relation to the God-human encounter in preaching?

10.3 The role of the preacher

An examination of preachers' role in preaching can enhance the homiletical understanding of their appropriate place. We can mention many roles of the preacher: pastor (Long 1989:30ff), manager, educator, teacher (Westerhoff 1993), theologian (Lischer 1981; Tisdale 1997), interpreter, messenger, herald (Long 1989:24ff), minister of the Word, mediator (Van der Geest 1981:79ff; Buttrick 1987:251ff; PS Wilson 1995:28ff; Ballard

1996:37ff), spokesman, communicator (C Miller 1994), rhetorician (Lester De Koster, in Logan (ed) 1986; Rodney Kennedy 1993), dialogue partner (Rose 1997), storyteller (E Steimle 1980; Long 1989:36ff), foreseer (Van der Geest 1981:75,120ff; Jabusch 1990:121; Miller 1996:148), prophet (Miller 1996:64), poet (Brueggemann 1986:23ff, 1989, 1997), curator of the inner gallery (Wiersbe 1994; Troeger 1990, 1999), etc. However, in our study, we shall concentrate on the role of preachers mainly in relation to their preaching of the divine presence.

10.3.1 The role of the preacher in the kerygmatic preaching tradition

When we consider the role of the preacher in view of the proclamation of the divine presence, an exemplary image of the preacher can be found in the kerygmatic preaching tradition. According to Rose (1997:37ff) who examined the purpose, content, language, and form of kerygmatic preaching in comparison with other homiletical traditions, such as traditional cognitive preaching and contemporary imaginative preaching, the purpose of kerygmatic preaching can be described as “both/and”: both transmission of the *kerygma* and the event of God speaking. This homiletical tradition was developed in the work of CH Dodd, Karl Barth, Gustaf Wingren, Robert Mounce and Dietrich Ritschl (Rose 1997:37ff; Resner 1999:62).

According to Rose (1997:37ff), CH Dodd contributed to the first half of the both/and, identifying the original *kerygma*, which contemporary preachers should transmit in their preaching. Dodd’s summary of the “primitive *kerygma*” or the original content of the apostles’ preaching is not a single formula. His intent was not to fix the *kerygma* as an irreducible formula, but to extract from the New Testament “the actual content of the gospel preached or proclaimed by the apostles” so that contemporary preachers could make “its essential relevance and truth clear” in their own preaching context (1937:3, 79, 128).

Both challenging and building on the work of Dodd, Mounce (1960:150ff) redefined primitive *kerygma* and encapsulated it in the following three statements: it was an assertion regarding the historicity of Jesus’ death, resurrection, and exaltation; a theological evaluation of Jesus as Christ and Lord; and an ethical summons to repent and receive forgiveness. Therefore, while the *kerygma* can be stated propositionally, Mounce insists that it is more than these propositions; it is also the medium for God’s saving activity (1960:156). When *kerygma* is truly preached, God is expected to speak and reveal Himself in the redemptive activity of preaching.

K Barth expresses the second half of the both/and, identifying the sermon as an event in which God speaks. His theology of the Word has significant ramifications for

understanding the function of the preacher in preaching. Barth's homiletical point of departure is God: "Preaching is the Word of God which He Himself has spoken" (Barth 1963:9). Concurring with the Barthian homiletical view, Mounce (1960:154,158) also follows Gustaf Wingren's perspective regarding the single purpose of preaching – that Christ might come to the audience:

When the preacher mounts the pulpit steps he does so under obligation to mediate the presence of Almighty God. He must allow God to speak. His words must bear the Divine Word. His voice must be God's voice. He stands before a group of people whose one great need is to be ushered into the presence of God.

For Mounce (1960:158), kerygmatic preaching has the single purpose of transmitting biblical *kerygma* as the essential content of the earliest Christian preaching, thus all Christian preaching, in such a way as to mediate the divine presence similar to the ancient apostle's preaching. In this unilateral emphasis the presupposition is that a kerygmatic proclamation can evoke the divine presence in the congregation, since *kerygma* is not only a message but also an event of God Himself (*cf.* Rose 1997:38ff).

However, a flaw of kerygmatic homiletics, especially also in the light of the subject of our study, is a certain ignorance of the preacher's undeniable role in preaching. For Barth (1991:51-2), "It is the Word of God and it owes nothing to man's ingenuity; he can only bear witness to it." He sums up the preacher's role as a duty or task. The preacher, primarily, is a herald. The Word must be served and the preacher's task is to bear witness to that Word as Scripture bears definitive witness to it. Following Karl Fezer's work on preaching with great appreciation, Barth (1991:41) willingly also follows Fezer's omission of the discussion on the role of the preacher:

It should be noted that the definition does not mention the preacher. There is in some sense a gap there. Since, however, the person is not constitutive for the concept of preaching, there are good reasons for Fezer's omission. *Materially the lacuna is of no significance* (my italics).

According to Resner: "From a frame of reference which understands preaching to be God's very word – especially with reference to its God-empowered efficacy to save hearers – the rhetorically pragmatic claims for the person of the preacher were theologically blasphemous to Barth" (Resner 1999:3; *cf.* Van der Geest 1981:82,93; Runia 1983:55,60). Thus, after Barth, homileticians had to make a conscious choice on the role of the preacher in terms either consonant with Barth's theology of the Word or with a more rhetorical emphasis. With this in mind, Resner (1999:62) epitomizes homiletical reactions on the Barthian view of the preacher as follows:

Those who followed Barth's theology tended toward a homiletical Docetism, i.e., a discussion of the Word of proclamation apart from its physical embodiment in the preacher. Those who ignored Barth tended toward a homiletical Donatism, i.e., a position wherein the efficacy of the preached word is dependent in some way on the person of the preacher.

Then, our question is: How should the human element, the person who stands before the congregation, and in the presence of God, be involved in the act of preaching? If preaching is the sermonic event in which God, in His sovereignty, comes and speaks His Word, then how can we appraise the role of the preacher in this word-event? Is the preacher a mere inactive sermonic conduit to pass the Word of God? As explained in 1.4.1.1, without a human preacher, we cannot define or understand the preaching of the Word of God. Although we confess that God speaks His own Word in preaching, this confession never defines the preacher's role as that of an inactive conduit.

Mere instrumentality does not exist in preaching. God never intended the Word to be handled with sterile gloves, kept free from contact with anything human. If this had been the intention, Christ would not have come among us in human form. God alone makes perfect the communication of the Word, in the heart and soul of the willing hearer. In this process, God uses who we are in all our humanity to bear the Word (PS Wilson 1995:28).

Then, our next question is: How can the preacher's voice be heard by the audience as the Word of God? An appropriate understanding of the preacher's role in preaching can be drawn from the pneumatological view of preaching, which, interestingly enough, is also stressed by Barthian homiletics (*cf.* Van der Geest 1981:57).

10.3.2 The preacher's role in relation to the Holy Spirit

As discussed in 8.2.1, the pneumatological dimension offers a point of departure for preachers to overcome the human impossibility of preaching. In addition, as mentioned in 8.2.2 and 8.2.3, the pneumatological understanding of preaching offers a springboard for preaching to be developed as the naming of God and the ecclesial practice of prayer. In order to properly locate the role of the preacher in relation to the work of the Holy Spirit, we shall first examine Calvin's view of the Holy Spirit in connection with preaching, and further deal with 'theonomic reciprocity,' which is suggested as an appropriate pneumatological sphere for the role of the human preacher.

10.3.2.1 Calvin's view on the role of the Holy Spirit in relation to the preacher

For Calvin, the final and definitive criterion for distinguishing between the true Word of God and false words of man in preaching is the witness of the Holy Spirit in the proclaimed

Gospel (Parker 1947:64). Unless the Holy Spirit enlightens the mind and gives life to a sermon, it will remain human words, powerless to bring salvation. Thus, “the work of the Holy Spirit cannot be separated from the proclamation of the Word of God” (Inst. I.9.3; IV. 8.13). “We may know that the external word is of no avail by itself, unless animated by the power of the Spirit. All power of action, then, resides in the Spirit Himself, and thus all power ought to be entirely referred to God alone” (Comm. Ez. 2:2). Preaching thus fails to be the Word of God without the work of the Holy Spirit in and through the human words. How then can we understand this mysterious co-relationship between human words and the divine Word? In order to explain this co-relationship in preaching, Calvin employs the terms of a dual ministry, *minister externus*, and *doctor internus*. He says:

When we say that the Holy Spirit uses an external ministry as an instrument, this is what we mean: Both in the preaching of the word and in the ministry of the Sacraments there are two ministers, each of whom has a distinct office. The external minister administers the word that resounds, as well as the sacred signs that are external, earthly, and perishable. The internal minister, i.e., the Holy Spirit, acts independently, internally, in order by his hidden power to effect communion with Christ, by one faith, in the hearts of whomever he wills. This communion is an internal matter, heavenly and imperishable (Corpus Reformatorum IX 764-75, in Fiset 1986:127-128).

The *minister externus* can speak the Word and administer the sacraments – even to the point where, if we hear God’s ministers, it is “just as if He himself spoke” (Inst., IV. 1.5) – but it would remain without effect were it not for the Spirit as the ‘doctor internus’ by whose action the promise of salvation penetrates our minds, a promise that would otherwise only strike the air or beat upon our ears” (Inst., III.1.4; cf. Inst., IV. 14. 9). Thus, preaching conjoins the Word of God in the words of the human preacher in such a way that the true Word of God can be offered by the human minister through the work of the Holy Spirit.

For this reason, for Calvin, preaching is more than human words or a mere acoustic performance reminding the hearer of biblical words. As an outward form manifesting the invisible contents of divine grace, preaching not only presents the Word of God itself, but also leads the listener into the divine presence so as to partake of the communion with Christ, and to receive His holy blessing. When, in His humility, God graciously gives His presence and power together with the human word, there is the closest collaboration between divine and human actions. Through this mysterious union: “he is not separated from the minister” (Comm. 1 Cor 3:7); “God Himself who is the Author is conjoined with the instrument, and the Spirit’s influence with man’s labor” (Comm. 1 Cor 9:1); “So close is the identity that the preacher can actually be called a minister of the Spirit and his work spoken of in the most exalted terms” (Comm. 1 Cor 3:7). This collaboration by the Holy

Spirit with human words stands at the centre of the mysterious co-relationship between the Word of God and human words in Calvin's view of the Word of God in preaching.

10.3.2.2 Theonomic reciprocity

Calvin's view of the preacher's role in relation to the work of the Holy Spirit in preaching can be further enhanced by 'theonomic reciprocity,' which was homiletically developed by Bohren, who, in his "Predigtlehre," explicitly strove to bridge the gap between the work of the Holy Spirit and the human preacher's involvement. As discussed before (10.3.2.1), co-operation of the Holy Spirit in preaching has been continually emphasized in Reformed homiletics. However, human participation in the work of God, by the Holy Spirit, is prone to be pictured in a way that excludes the human dimension. Fiset (1986:124,128) introduces two forms encountered in this exclusive view:

On the one hand, reference is made to human participation as something that appears on the scene after God by his Spirit has already done the essential work immediately. On the other, human participation is viewed as more apparent than real; the Holy Spirit takes possession of a person who then becomes an instrument of, and base of operation for, the Other. On this view one cannot really speak of an active and creative participation of human beings in the Word of God. A human being is no more than an Aeolian harp whose strings can only be stirred into music by the soft breezes of the Spirit; he or she is not the harp player.

However, "any doctrine of the Holy Spirit that relieves us of our work and responsibility is plainly false" (Craddock 1985:30). "The work of the Holy Spirit never takes place at the expense of our essential humanity. On the contrary, it finds its central focus in restoring the human person to her freedom and responsibility" (Fiset 1986:125; cf Van der Geest 1981:121; Runia 1983:95; Miller 1996:37-38). Bohren (1974:74) also insists that a homiletical conviction of the Holy Spirit does not cut human work in half. Rather, it means to emphasize anew what humans can do in the preaching context: "The pneumatological foundation includes anthropological aspects in its own legitimation." (1974:74)

Bohren (1974:74-75) examines this anthropological aspect of pneumatological preaching with reference to Van Ruler's discussion on the structural difference between Christological incarnation and pneumatological indwelling: "The Word became flesh and God became human; the Holy Spirit is poured upon humans. The Holy Spirit did not become human just as God became human, but entered into humans." This "indwelling" of the Spirit does not mean that a person is depersonalized by the reception of the Spirit. In this indwelling of the Holy Spirit in a human preacher, the Spirit rather remains the Spirit and a human being remains human.

However, this indwelling of God turns out to be the highest intensification of God's association with His messengers, and this intensified association of the Spirit with human preachers motivates and activates them with a human quality to participate spontaneously and actively in God's work of uttering His Word to His people. In his understanding of theonomic reciprocity, Bohren tries to synthesize both the impossibility (the miracle) of preaching and the possibility (the technique) within the pneumatological dimension of preaching. On the one hand, the work of the Spirit in human preachers presupposes that the naming of God, or the proclamation of the divine presence, is impossible for human beings. Moreover, for Bohren (1974:77), the pneumatological dimension of preaching does not entail perfectionism, since "Pneumatologically speaking, perfectionism is a lethal heresy that threatens life." In short, producing the divine presence in preaching is impossible; if possible, it is a miracle. On the other hand, for Bohren, the work of the Spirit in preaching also allows a preacher with an own human technique to participate in God's presence in preaching. In this sense, preaching is a human activity (and "technique" in Bohren's term) that is homiletically legitimated by the work of the Spirit. Thus, in this theonomic reciprocity, as established by the pneumatological dimension of preaching, the miracle of preaching to name God (an impossibility) harmonizes with human techniques (a possibility) in such a way as to herald the divine presence.

10.3.3 The preacher's mediatory role

10.3.3.1 The mediatory nature of the preacher's role

We have tried to indicate that the image of the human preacher, as an inactive conduit, is inappropriate for a comprehensive homiletical understanding of how the voice of the preacher can truly be heard in preaching. We have confirmed that, in theonomic reciprocity, a human preacher in whom the Spirit dwells, can, with human quality and responsibility, actively participate in witnessing God's name and His presence. However, as regards this spiritually empowered role, we must also clearly limit the homiletical boundaries. Otherwise, the role of preachers in theonomic reciprocity might be misunderstood; we might think that human preachers are supposed to deliver a crucial performance to attain God's presence in preaching. However, theonomic reciprocity does not mean synergism, "which means a human being is able, in virtue of his natural potential, to contribute a share next to God's share of salvation" (Fiet 1986:131). In fact, what preachers do is not a preparation for, or the completion of, what God Himself does immediately: His sovereign coming and presence in His Word. God and man do not cooperate in some or other fashion; God acts. It is He who comes into the lives of people to actualize salvation. But, He does it by taking people into His service and by equipping them with Spirit-given charisma, i.e.

with authority and power to do His work.

In order to prevent theonomic reciprocity from falling into synergism that is understood in terms of the soteriological perfectionism emphasized in Christology, Firet (1986:131-134) discusses this inter-subjective relationship between God and man in the light of the intermediary pastoral role-fulfilment for God's coming in His Word. By using the term 'intermediary,' Firet reveals that, in pastoral role-fulfilment, there is a field of tension between the Word of God and His people to whom the Word comes; "pastoral role-fulfillment, which is a human activity in God's work, is the field in which God and man are brought together in a relationship of tension in which the word occurs which brings people to understanding and change" (1986:133).

Given the field of the pneumatological tension between God and man in pastoral role-fulfilment, we can understand the practical role of a preacher, mainly in respect of 'mediation,' that harmoniously considers the pneumatological dimensions of preaching both as miracle (impossibility) and as human technique (possibility). As examined in 10.2, the preacher's appropriate place in the preaching of the divine presence is as mediator between God and man. We shall now consider the following two practical roles of the human preacher as mediator: witness and representation of the divine presence.

10.3.3.2 Witness: Verbal mediation of the divine presence

When we examine the pneumatological tension between the impossibility of creating the divine presence and the possibility of human activity that participates with human technique in God's coming in the Word, we find a frame for discussing the preacher's role as witness, mainly in terms of its mediatory dimension. To begin with, the image of a witness indicates the fact that the presence of God in preaching does not depend upon any human technique. As Long (1989:23) rightly insists, "Preaching does not cause Christ to be present. It is possible only because Christ is already present, and to speak in Christ's name is to claim Christ's own promise. 'The one who hears you hears me' (Luke 10:16)." In brief, the preachers' role as witness implies that they cannot cause God to be present (like a vending machine spews out what a customer wants at any time) but rather, through verbal mediatory work, including the articulation and celebration of God's name and His presence, they witness about God who is already present, so that the audience may also come closer to an awareness of the divine presence. Here the preacher's witness is not the Word of God itself; it is a verbal and sacramental mediation to point out the divine presence to the audience. When a preacher's witness, empowered by the Spirit, mediately points out God and His Word to the audience, the Holy Spirit illuminates them, so that they may be brought before Him with a clearer awareness of God. Through a preacher's witness of God, the veil

that covers the audience’s eyes is removed and they are drawn into God’s presence. Thus, a very significant role of the preacher is to mediate God verbally to the audience, the God who has already offered His name and presence through the reading of the Bible. Through this mediatory witness, the pneumatological tension between the impossibility of creating the divine presence and the possibility of human technique can be overcome.

In addition to the abovementioned synchronic paradoxical dimension of impossibility and possibility, a preacher’s mediatory witness also diachronically bridges the eschatological gap between the ‘already’ of paschal-presence and the ‘not yet’ of the *parousia*-presence, as the figure below (Fig. 9) shows:

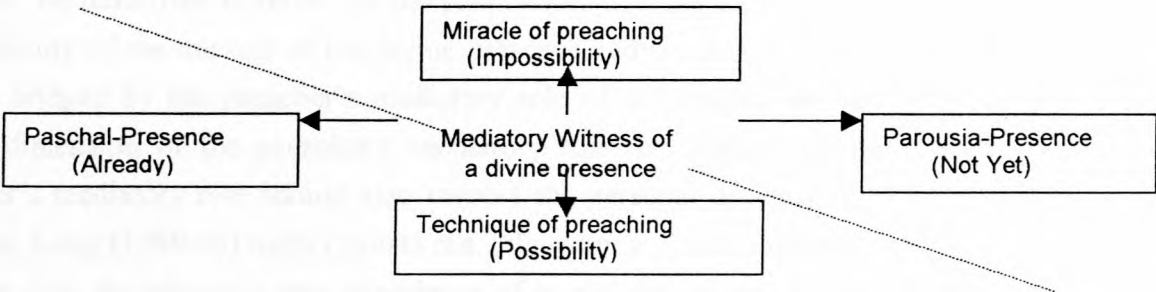


FIG. 9 MEDIATORY WITNESS TO BRIDGE THE GAP WHEN PREACHING THE DIVINE PRESENCE

In this sense, Lischer (1981:84) rightly insists that “preaching and hearing is an historical activity; it is a part of the eschatological action of God which has broken into history and now lives on the ‘inside’ of history.” Through a preacher’s witness of Jesus Christ, who will come again, the future of Jesus Christ can be shaped in the audience’s present lives within an eschatological faith structure. In this preaching, “the future promised by God and assured in Christ Jesus can take hold of our lives now. Christ is present as anticipation in the common hope of Christian faith. In our preaching, Christ comes to us not only as a figure from the past but as the future perfect of God-with-us” (Buttrick 1988:83). In this sense, the mediatory witness of the divine presence should be understood both in terms of an individual encounter with God, as well as the eschatological expectation of the final consummation of God-with-us.

When we understand the mediatory witness in terms of the eschatological expectation of the *parousia*-presence, our preaching cannot only overcome the sermonic adherence to static proofs of the divine presence, such as success, wealth, or honour, but also help the audience towards an eschatological expectation of finding the mysterious divine presence even in God’s “absent situations”, such as suffering, failure, or sickness, situations in which

God's mysterious presence harmonizes with His silence (Brueggemann 1989:65,80,99). "Accordingly, we have come to understand that 'absence' and 'presence' are not simply conceptual oppositions" (Allen [eds] 1997:103). Rather, through mediatory witness, we find that these are two sides of a coin. On the one hand, in an eschatological perspective, our witness of the divine presence is "a poor reflection as in a mirror" (1 Cor 13:12). And, until that last day, our preaching must surely involve God's absence and His silence, since until the *parousia*, "It is our God and Savior who hides Himself" (Isa 45:14). On the other hand, through this mediatory witness of the divine presence, the illumination by the Spirit, as the first fruit of the final harvest, helps us to taste the future of Christ, here and now.

10.3.3.3 Representation: Personal mediation of the divine presence

Thus far, we have tried to show that the pneumatological paradox of preaching between the impossibility of the miracle of the divine presence and the possibility of human technique can be bridged by the preacher's mediatory role of witnessing. We also emphasized the verbal dimension of the preacher's mediatory role. In addition to this dimension, the preacher's mediatory role should also involve the personal dimension of the mediator. In this vein, Long (1989:46) rightly points out; "the witness is not a neutral observer. The truth is larger than the witness's own experience of it, and the witness is always testifying to a gospel larger than the preacher's personal faith, but the witness preacher has experienced it at some depth and is thereby involved in it." The witness is not a neutral observer or reporter, but in mediatory witnessing, the witness is involved in the responsible representation of what he/she witnesses. This is what Phillips Brooks meant in his classic saying, "preaching is the bringing of truth through personality." This does not mean that what is represented in the act of witnessing depends upon human potential. It rather means that the divine presence cannot but be influenced by a preacher's personality and integrity that mediately represent God's presence (Van der Geest 1981:79ff; Fretheim 1984:149ff; Buttrick 1987:251; Jabusch 1990:123; PS Wilson 1995:28; Ballard 1996:37ff; Resner 1999). More detailed aspects of the personal dimension of the mediatory witness will now be examined in relation to the preacher's triple consciousness.

10.4 The preacher's triple consciousness

Thus far, we have discussed the preachers' place and role in preaching the divine presence. Through the discussion, we confirmed that their place is in-between God and humans, and that their role as witnesses is subject to the empowerment of the Spirit. And, by examining theonomic reciprocity, we pointed out the homiletical significance of the anthropological aspect in this witness. In addition, we discussed the preachers' role in mediatory witnessing that bridges the gap, not only between the impossibility of creating the divine presence and

the possibility of human technique, but also between the paschal presence and *parousia* presence.

Based upon these understandings, we shall now turn to a more practical question: When preachers are in the pulpit, within what relations do they operate? If the preaching has to do with the divine presence, we know that, in this context, preachers are involved with three agents: God, the audience, and with themselves. The figure below (Fig. 10) indicates this.

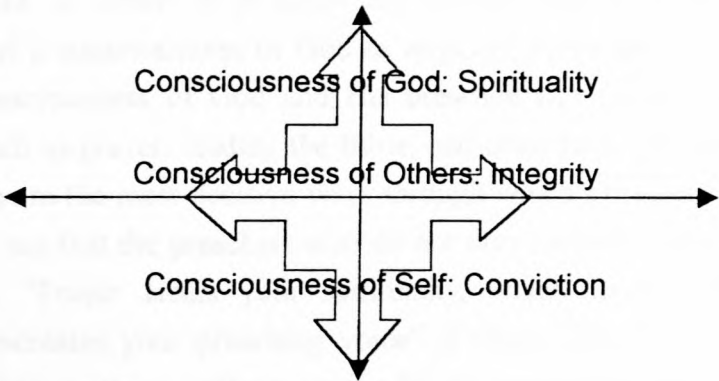


FIG.10 THREE AGENTS OF WHICH THE PREACHER IS AWARE

First, the preachers’ witness about the divine presence is a sermonic reflection of their consciousness of God. Without this pre-consciousness, they cannot witness about God in the pulpit. In our study, we need to examine how the preachers’ consciousness of God works in the act of witness in the pulpit. Secondly, preachers who witness about God also stand before the audience, and have to consider their consciousness of the audience since their witness is also based upon their personal and integral relationship with the audience. Lastly, preachers’ outer witness also reflects their consciousness of the self, mainly in terms of an inner conviction of God. We shall now examine each consciousness in detail.

10.4.1 Consciousness of God: Spirituality and *eusebeia*

Firstly, preaching of the divine presence is a verbal reflection of the preacher’s awareness and consciousness of God. This preaching of the divine presence is the result of “an integration of self-awareness with an awareness of the other” (Augsburger 1986:37). Thus, according to Buttrick (1987:252), “preaching, at minimum, speaks of Mystery in the presence of The Mystery; speaks from a consciousness of Consciousness that is conscious of us.” This magnified consciousness of God leads preachers to wonder how they can talk about God. Thus, “preaching is always a kind of embarrassment: How dare we speak of God if God is conscious of our speaking” of Him (Buttrick 1987:252). For this reason, without a clear consciousness of God, the witness cannot but deliver a distorted or coloured

witness of God. In a sense, “the preacher aims to help the congregation discover (and respond to) God’s presence and purposes in the world. Consequently, the preacher must have a well-considered vision of God” (Allen [ed] 1997:111). No matter what preachers do, the most obvious thing about them to those who attend their sermons, will be their touch, or lack of touch, with God (C Miller 1989:30).

If preachers’ witness about God is a verbal reflection of their consciousness of God, we need to examine the following two questions: How can preachers enhance their consciousness of God, in order to proclaim his divine presence? And, what is the characteristic result of a consciousness of God as acquired by certain spiritual practices? Firstly then, this consciousness of God and His presence can be enhanced by several spiritual practices, such as prayer, reading the Bible, and obedience. To begin with, prayer and reading the Bible are the most decisive ways through which preachers encounter God. It is not too much to say that the preachers who do not pray to God, cannot witness about his divine presence. “Prayer labels your spirituality, which in turn influences your preaching. Prayer modulates your preaching voice” (Cilliers 2001:8). Thus, one cannot preach about the divine presence without prayer for an encounter with God. Moreover, preachers’ devotional practices should be practically embodied by obedience to God’s Word, which is heard through prayer and reading the Bible. Since we have already discussed prayer and reading of the Bible in the previous chapter (9.4.2), we shall now turn to other practices that may give preachers a (new) consciousness of God.

In addition to prayer, reading the Bible and obedience, Graham Greene (cited in Westerhoff 1994:30ff) suggests that the following four requirements are necessary for human beings to live in an ever-deepening and loving relationship with God: a willingness to embrace suffering - our own and the world’s; a life marked by moments of silence and solitude; a willingness to pay attention to our spirits’ deep restlessness; and life within a community of faith that sees the image of God, the image of Christ, in us. We need to pay attention to the first of these requirements, “embracing suffering,” since, according to Luther, suffering is one of three basic elements in the preacher’s training process, i.e. prayer, meditation, and suffering (Cilliers 2001:10).

While emphasizing suffering, we must surely not seek suffering or wallow in it. However, suffering is one of the crucial ways through which God imparts Himself to us; many Christians have experienced God in their suffering. Thus, preachers cannot live on the surface of life, avoiding or denying suffering, and yet communicate the Gospel. Suffering and death are ways to new life. Thus:

It is those who from the depths of despair, have experienced God's redeeming power to transform despair into hope, sorrow into joy, and death into life who are able to communicate God's redemptive power in ways that make it possible for other to experience it. It is those who have been able to identify with the weaknesses, the sin, the misery, and the needs of others, because they know their own, who are able to explain to others the nature of God's providence (Westerhoff 1994:32).

As a "wounded healer," while embracing suffering – their own and the world's - preachers who experience the divine grace to heal their suffering, can witness with conviction about the God who heals those who suffer (Augsburger 1986:368ff). In conclusion, through prayer, reading the Bible, obedience to the Word, and embracing suffering, preachers can enhance their awareness of God, and so act as mediators of His presence in the pulpit. If preachers are able to encounter God through these spiritual practices, then, our second question concerns the characteristics of human consciousness of God, not in terms of a mystical experience, but in terms of piety and godliness before God.

This second question can be answered best by examining *eusebeia*, which is emphasized in, and derived from the New Testament. *Eusebeia*, when brought into relationship with the preachers' consciousness of God, can be discussed in the light of the following two dimensions of Christian devotional life before God: *Coram Deo*, that is preachers' personal vertical relationship with God, and horizontal reflection of their relationship with God to others. In the New Testament, *eusebeia* means devotion, piety and godliness before God. Paul often uses *eusebeia* in the same way as he uses faith and sanctification. Concerning *eusebeia*, as derived from the New Testament, Louw (1999:193) rightly points out:

In the NT, *eusebeia* signifies the believer's total attitude towards life as based upon faith in Christ. This new life-style is exercised in the awareness of God's presence. It also has ethical implication. Paul's letter to Timothy emphasizes the notion that piety, as an expression of the awareness of God's presence, reflects a certain life-style and behavior and is expressed concretely in the congregation. Thus *eusebeia* is not an inwardly directed quality which concerns only psychic processes, but a corporative issue of the entire congregation.

From this understanding of *eusebeia*, we can confirm both dimensions of preachers' consciousness of God: their vertical awareness of God and horizontal reflection of this to others. Moreover, some understand *eusebeia* in terms of a spirituality that includes a more comprehensive frame of reference about the awareness of God and its horizontal response. Just like *eusebeia*, spirituality is also described as including both a vertical transcendental dimension and horizontal imminent dimension, as it can be understood as an awareness of transcendency in the midst of existential and social conflicts. According to Louw (1999:192), "spirituality is actualized when Christian faith is integrally linked to our being

human. The presence of God in a person's life should contribute to life's meaning and humanity. It should link the inner and the private dimensions to the external dimensions of life: our social context and public character."

As Louw emphasizes here, preachers' spirituality cannot but be actualized in their public act of preaching. Moreover, as mentioned before, preachers' private consciousness of God not only constitutes a crucial component of their witness about God, but is also visually and reflectively expressed through their concrete relationship with the audience. Thus, when preachers mount the pulpit in order to witness about God, they have both an awareness of God, who is aware of them, and of the audience who are also aware of the preachers' integrity or lack thereof. This is what Bohren (1980:454ff, 468) means when he mentions "two audiences" who hear the preacher's sermon: God as well as the human audience. For this reason, preachers' consciousness of, and their relationship with the audience, constitute another crucial component of their preaching. A lot hinges on the preacher's integrity. We shall now turn to the latter issue.

10.4.2 Consciousness of the listener: Integrity

When in the pulpit, preachers are aware, not only of the God who is also aware of them, but also of the audience who heeds them and expects to hear the Word of God from their lips. This reciprocal consciousness between preacher and audience constitutes a crucial component of the God-human encounter in preaching. According to Van der Geest (1981:60-61), "the real mystery of encounter occurs in the experience of the congregation in the relationship between the preacher and the listeners. The communication between pastor and congregation is the place where 'it' takes place, if it takes place at all. 'It' is the communion of Lord and people in faith." For van der Geest, the preacher's personality constitutes a crucial component for the real mystery of the God-human encounter in the preaching act. However, as briefly mentioned in 10.3.3.3, the Word of God does not depend either upon the preacher's potential, or upon the preacher's personality in a decisive manner. Therefore, van der Geest must be criticized for his one-sided view in this respect.

We must not dally with a notion that the preacher's character is the 'Word of God'. Popular conviction seems to suggest that the minister's Christian personality somehow speaks through sermons so that, no matter how inept the sermon, people are drawn to God. But, the Second Helvetic Confession rightly insists that we hear the Word of God through the lips of sinful preachers because, after all, what else is there! Just as the Catholic doctrine of *ex opere* was originally framed to protect against the idea that the character of a priest could determine the efficacy of a sacrament, so as preachers (along with the Reformers) we must affirm a kind of *ex opere* of the Word. Our character

does not preach. The gospel is always greater than preachers of the gospel – thank God (Buttrick 1998:458; *cf.* Allen [ed] 1997:66).

If it is true that the preacher's personality does not preach the Word of God, then, how can we understand the importance of the preacher's personality in the whole process of preaching the divine presence? A possible answer can be found in our previous discussion of the place and role of the preacher, i.e. as in-between and mediatory witness of God. In other words, although the preacher's personality is never the Word of God itself, this Word adopts the preacher's personality as a dynamic and mediatory servant for delivering it. Although the Word speaks more loudly than the personality, in theonomic reciprocity, the preacher's personality takes part in confessing the divine presence with an own freedom and responsibility (*cf.*, 2 Cor 4:7). With this paradoxical dimension of the preacher's personality in mind, we shall examine the importance of the preacher's integrity in terms of the prophetic embodiment of the Word (a biblical theological foundation for the preacher's personality) and the role of the preacher's ethos in preaching (a rhetorical foundation).

10.4.2.1 The prophetic embodiment of the Word of God

As Philip Brooks rightly points out, preaching is bringing truth through personality (quoted in PS Wilson 1995:78). Without their personality's confirmation, the preachers' witness in the pulpit is weakened to accord with what they actually know and experience. The importance of the preacher's personality can be understood better in the light of the biblical view of the prophet's personality that also constitutes a crucial component of the authenticity of the Word. Although there is a clear gap between Old Testament prophets and contemporary preachers, the biblical theological understanding of prophetic ministry offers an appropriate foundation when thinking about the importance of personality in preaching. Fretheim's (1984:149ff) study is of assistance in this regard.

According to Fretheim (1984:149), "God is seen to be present to Israel not only in what the prophet has to say, but in the word embodied in the prophet's life." Thus, to hear and see the prophet was to hear and see God. After the theophanic traditions, the prophetic ministry constitutes both a replacement and continuation of the line of direct theophany. Moreover, the prophets move beyond the older theophanies, at one point in particular: "God does not, as in the older theophanies, just appear, speak a word, and then leave. God leaves the word behind imbedded in the prophet. God calls the prophet to take the word received and embody that word from the moment of the call onward. The prophet, in effect, is called to function as an ongoing theophany" (Fretheim 1984:151).

This embodied theophany in the person of the prophet is clearly evident in respect of the

union of person, office, and word in the prophetic ministry. For example, Hosea and Isaiah's prophetic office and private life began to merge. Both gave names to their children that contain prophetic messages (*cf.* Hos 1; Isa 8:1-4), and Hosea married at the command of God. Moreover, in Jeremiah and Ezekiel, we see persons becoming embodied Word of God. This embodiment is vividly portrayed in their call narratives or in their absorption of the Word (*cf.* Jer 1:9; Ez 3:1-3). Here, the prophet ingested the Word of God; thereby the Word was enfleshed in the very person of the prophet.

In giving the word in such a way that it passes over into the very being of the prophet, God is present and active not only in and through what the prophet speaks, but also in what he does and, indeed, in who he is. The prophet's life is an embodiment of the Word of God; the prophet is a vehicle for divine immanence. The prophet's life is thus theomorphic (Fretheim 1984:153,165).

The prophetic ministry of embodying the Word of God, in person, signifies the importance of the preacher's integrity. Bohren (1980:387ff) understands the messenger's theomorphic life in terms of a 'model' of what he/she preaches. According to him, "the preacher empowered by the Word becomes the model of what he/she is to witness. The preacher as a model is not the presence of the Word; the Word of God is reflected in the model preacher" (1980:388). As stated in 10.3.2, this exemplary role of the preacher's integrity is only possible based on the pneumatological foundation, since "model exists only by the coming of the Spirit into the flesh" (1980:393). Based upon this biblical theological perspective on the importance of the preacher's personality, we now need to examine the rhetorical aspect of the preacher's ethos.

10.4.2.2 The role of the preacher's ethos in preaching

Before we turn our discussion of the preacher's integrity in the pulpit to the rhetorical subject of ethos, we probably first need to examine the acceptability of rhetoric for Christian preaching, but this is beyond our study's limits. However, in our study, we shall develop the discussion with the premise that a rhetorical frame, which is understood within a theological frame, is indeed necessary for Christian preaching (*cf.* Lester De Koster, in Logan [ed] 1986; Larsen 1992:35ff; Rodney Kennedy 1993; PS Wilson 1995:75ff; Resner 1999).

Since Aristotle, ethos has been accepted as a crucial rhetorical component for successful persuasion. The three fundamental elements that Aristotle suggests for persuasive speech are *logos* (the speech's reasoned argumentation), *pathos* (how hearers are affected in a speech), and *ethos* (the speaker's perceived moral character). Of these three, Aristotle gives *ethos* priority of potency to persuade: "Persuasion is achieved by the speaker's personal

character when the speech is so spoken as to make us think him credible” (Larsen 1992:47). Aristotle provides the following three reasons for a speaker’s personality being persuasive: practical wisdom, virtue and good will. These root metaphors of character consequently express themselves in the following nine virtues: liberality, justice, courage, temperance, magnanimity, magnificence, prudence, gentleness, and wisdom. All of these could be described as attributes of a successful orator (Resner 1999:24ff).

Aristotle’s views should be inculturated homiletically. For, when we understand preachers’ *ethos* merely in terms of their moral and ethical potential, as the classic rhetoric postulates, the divine character of Christian preaching becomes diluted by a worldly method of rhetorical persuasion, and the mysterious sovereignty of the divine presence in preaching would be blurred. This is contrary to what theonomic reciprocity presupposes of the miracle of preaching. In this regard, Resner’s study on St Paul’s reverse-*ethos* is of assistance in our study.

It is designated ‘reverse’ or ‘ironic’ *ethos* to differentiate it from the Aristotelian notion that derives its meaning and function primarily from paying attention to the audience’s expectation of how a speaker can be deemed credible (Resner 1999:4). For Resner, reverse-*ethos* is a theologically informed rhetorical category that describes the humble nature and function of the preacher’s person in relation to preaching the paradoxical humiliating death of the almighty God on the cross. Concerning the preacher’s *ethos* in preaching:

Paul’s chief problem in Corinth had to do with the differing standards that he and the Corinthians used for determining speaker credibility. Paul does not measure up to the Corinthians’ credibility standards, standards that they had borrowed unreflectively from their rhetorically-enmeshed environment. Paul’s task in the face of this was to reorient the Corinthian Christians to a different expectation for and perception of preacher-*ethos*. He does this by linking ministerial *ethos* to the exigencies of the gospel message of Jesus Christ crucified rather than to the exigencies of the sociocultural situation of first-century Corinth (Resner 1999:129).

In a word, Paul grounds his appeal for *ethos* to the Corinthians, not in his human capacity and morality that might be relevant to the socio-cultural context of the age, but in his Christology, in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The message of the cross puts to death *kata sarka* (according to the flesh) standards of what makes preaching preaching, and what makes preachers preachers. As a reversal of the epistemological frame, the Gospel of the cross points out the way to see everything anew. Moreover, in the words “of the cross,” God creates and sustains a new community – the cruciform community. Within this new, alternative community, the preacher, by God’s design, is a servant of Christ and a steward of God’s mysteries. Thus:

For Paul, true *ethos* is derivative not of a social and cultural expectation but of an expectation (a divine call, commission, and empowerment) that arises from the nature of the gospel and the community of faith that is formed and sustained by the God-given and empowered *logos* (the cross-event-proclaimed). Any talk, therefore, of Paul's conception of *ethos* must be couched in a discussion of his reverse-*logos* (the gospel message) and the alternative community that this strange *logos* of the cross forms and funds (Resner 1999:130).

As Resner (1999:184) observes, St Paul uses what may be called a paradoxical and reverse-*ethos*, since, for Paul, *kata sarka* uses of *ethos* selfishly serve the preacher; *kata stauron* uses of *ethos* serve Christ and God's continuing mysterious and redemptive activity in the world by displaying concretely how God is still active. Moreover, the gospel of the cross, as a reverse-*logos*, is not only legitimized by the resurrection of Jesus Christ of whom Paul is aware at the very instant of gospel proclamation, but even necessitates a reverse-*ethos* in the preaching situation, so that Paul's witness is not born out of his own rhetorical brilliance, but rather from the reality of the God who works with Paul's witness in the very moment of preaching.

10.4.3 Consciousness of self: Conviction

Given Paul's reverse-*ethos* that is concomitant with the witness of the reverse-*logos* of the cross and resurrection, we can confirm that preachers are conscious of the God, who is aware of them, and of the audience, to whom they owe the proclamatory responsibility to reflect the authenticity of the reverse-*logos*. This double consciousness of preachers calls forth a third consciousness, i.e. their self-consciousness: Who am I, who is doing this? When preachers witness about God, their witness not only reflects their consciousness of God and of the audience, but should also be firmly based upon their consciousness of themselves. Otherwise, their witness about God would be totally apart from themselves and in fact, false. "The actor may 'play' another person; the preacher should play himself or herself" (Van der Geest 1981:44). This is one of the ultimate problems of preaching that Bohren (1980:43) points out: "It can happen that, even though the preacher is not aware of the meaning of what he/she is doing, he/she is still doing it." And this is also one of the aspects that St Paul takes into consideration when he proclaims: "After I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize" (1 Cor 9:27b). Then, our question is: Who am I, the one who is witnessing about God? In this section, we shall examine the preacher's self-consciousness in witnessing about God, in the light of the following three terms: the preacher's subjective stance; disclosure of the preacher's subjectivity; and the preacher's unique voice that reveals his/her subjective, but authentic encounter with God.

10.4.3.1 The preacher's subjective stance

As rightly pointed out by Louw (1999:330), "Each pastor has a unique image of God which reflects his/her own experience of God and what He means to him/her personally" This unique experience of God and what He means to preachers personally constitute their subjective stance in witnessing about God. Moreover, these subjective and existential factors concerning the preacher influence parishioners' encounter with God. For this reason, preachers firstly need to grasp what their unique identity and experience of God is. As examined in 7.4, various internal and external motivations and variables, which each of the five Korean preachers reveal, exert a relevant influence both on their preaching of the divine presence and on the audience's encounter with God. These variables might emerge from the preacher's internal personal character (Lee), or from the family background, a personal experience of God, the world, and self on the journey of life (Cho, Kwak, Oak), or from a theological bias (Park, Oak, Cho), or externally from the preacher's socio-cultural and political surroundings (Park) or the audience (Cho, Kwak). According to Edwina Hunter (in Van Seters [ed] 1988:95), the preachers' awareness of their own histories helps them to discover how their personal narratives intersect with biblical narratives.

We can discover how to 'own' the texts we preach as we know ourselves better and discover the journeys that make us who we are. If we claim our own histories, if we know who we are and why we are, and if we know how to reflect on those influences that have shaped us, then we may be able to initiate change. The preacher who undertakes reflective and critical self-analysis may well be on the way to the greatest freedom he or she has ever experienced: freedom to preach, freedom to change theologies that would claim God's love is limited to the rich and the powerful while excluding the poor and the powerless; freedom to act out a commitment to social justice; freedom to envision new faith communities and new ways of being faithful to God, to God's people, and to self.

Preachers do not know everything about God. Hopefully, they will also not know nothing about God, but have a story to tell, even if it is a partial story. The preacher's partial witness about God can be further examined in terms of 'point-of-view,' which Buttrick (1998:57ff) discusses homiletically: "we are perspectival creatures; our consciousness is oriented in time and space and aims at reality. Thus all our speaking, whenever and wherever, will express some point-of-view." Moreover, because, "Whenever we speak we will be speaking some particular point-of-view, whether we are aware of it or not, perspectival language, in turn, forms the consciousness of a congregation; it shapes congregational point-of-view" (1998:61). For this reason, the preacher's clear awareness of self and own perspective is of crucial importance not only to the self, but also to the audience's encounter with God.

10.4.3.2 Disclosure of the preacher's subjectivity

If we accept that each preacher holds a unique and subjective point of view on God, must we legitimize preachers' disclosure of their own partiality and subjectivity in preaching? How much should preachers disclose about themselves in preaching, if at all? If not, why?

One possible reason for dismissing the disclosure of the preacher's self in preaching is based upon the homiletical presupposition that the preached message is the very Word of God; if preached messages are colored and textured by preachers' race, gender, age, personality type, educational degree, theological background, and socio-political surroundings, then how can they insist on the message being the Word of God? According to Gardner Taylor (in Wardlaw [ed] 1983:138), "the truth is that the coloring and texturing of the sermon, no matter what the text may be, will be influenced by the personality and outlook of the preacher." Admitting this subjective nature of the preached message, some homileticians suggest that the preached message should be understood not as a universal 'truth,' but as a 'tentative proposal' that acknowledges its limitations and biases (*cf.* Rose 1997:5).

However, preachers' subjective personalities need not necessarily blur the Word of God. As mediators, preachers' own personalities are very significant currencies through which the divine presence can be translated to the audience. In addition to the previous discussion in 10.3.1 of the mediatory role of preachers, the homiletical importance of the involvement of the preachers' selves in preaching can be further underlined by the communicative reality that any indifference to the self in preaching in fact hinders and blurs the authenticity of what preachers are saying. For this reason, Bohren (1974:409) attacks preachers' indifferent "we" behind which they hide and become impersonal.¹² Preachers hiding behind an indifferent "we" in the pulpit is prone to overlook their responsibility to indirectly and mediatorily, but authentically, model what they say in the pulpit (*cf.* 10.4.2.1)

Another possible reason for dismissing the preacher's self-disclosure in the pulpit is argued from the fact that elements such as personal illustration divide the audience's consciousness. Thus, Buttrick (1987:142) has argued forcefully against the use of a 'personal illustration' in preaching, as the hearer's focus will be divided between what the preacher is trying to say and the preacher's own person. However, according to Resner (1999:160), "Buttrick fails to recognize that preachers are making unceasing statements about themselves by their perspectival choice of scripture text, their choice of stories and characters, and even by their

¹² The same critique is found in Helmut Thielicke's (1978:70ff) and Van der Geest's (1981:147) comments on 'docetic sermons'.

fastidious avoidance of any reference to self.” All these selective and perspectival utterances, based on the preacher’s own point of view in the pulpit, reveal his/her own *ethos*, and by these the audience most certainly constructs “*ethos* portrayals” and encounters with the preacher.

If the preacher cannot but disclose the self in preaching, then how much should the preacher reveal to the audience? What is the hallmark of the tension between the preacher’s closeness to, and distance from, the audience? As Resner (1999:157-158) rightly points out, the actual speaker is never truly accessible to the listeners in a rhetorical situation.

What hearers know of the ‘real speaker’ is an interpretive amalgam of information mediated verbally and nonverbally by the speaker in combination with the expectations and prejudices of the hearers. Thus, hearers really know only a constructed speaker, that is a perception based upon the array of information listeners receive about the speaker, put together within the interpretative framework that hearers use to assess such information.

If the preacher’s pulpit personality is not simply identical to his or her real biographical person, but rather to the constructed and stylized person that the audience interpretatively reformulates, how can we understand the authenticity of the preacher’s person in preaching? An answer can be found in Theissen (1995:117) who suggests that the authenticity of the preacher’s person can be determined by the balance between self-revelation and self-stylization. For him, what must be examined is not the fact of the person’s stylization in preaching, but its manner. In other words, “the subjective authenticity of the preacher’s person does not consist in a direct account of the ‘unwashed’ subjectivity of the preacher, but in the deliberate shaping of the preacher’s own thought, feeling, and life in a direction which could also be valid for others” (1995:117). So, the hallmark of the subjective authenticity of the preacher’s person is not simply that the preacher should say only what he really thinks and bears witness to, but that the preacher’s real person indeed matters in what he/she witnesses. To formulate a more practical guide for subjective authenticity, Theissen (1995:118) suggests two complementary sides: the preachers’ role and their un-Christian shadow. What he means by the latter is that, when preachers frankly deal with ungodly aspects in their lives, they can become models of how others, too, can deal with their own ‘shadows.’ Thus, when the preacher’s real person, who admits his/her sinful nature, involves and reveals his/her frank struggle with (sometimes paradoxical and frustrating) mysterious aspects of the divine-presence-in-absence, this witness can bring the authenticity of the preacher’s person to the audience.

10.4.3.3 The preacher's unique voice in an authentic encounter with God

If preachers have a personal and partial, but authentic, encounter with God, and must witness about this encounter, this confessional witness must be done in a convincing voice that reflects the authenticity of the encounter. Thus, in this section, we shall examine the sermonic relationship between preachers' authentic consciousness of God, and, when preaching about God, their corresponding convincing voice that enhances the authenticity of their witness.

A point of departure for examining this relationship is the fact that preachers' authentic consciousness of God, which results from their personal engagement with God, cannot but be expressed in partial, perspectival language. As Buttrick (1987:62) points out, "The language of preaching, as all human language, is radically perspectival." Thus, in the pulpit, "impersonal, objective speech is impossible" (PS Wilson 1995:67). And, in turn, this perspectival language determines its delivery style and emotional tone: "though preaching will use ordinary language, preaching the gospel in the presence of God is a fairly strange vocation. A casual style will contradict the essential character of the gospel. Moreover, casual chatter is scarcely appropriate if, indeed, we stand in the presence of the holiness of God" (Buttrick 1987:77-78).

Add to this the observation that each meaning holds its unique vocal aura. According to Frost (cited in Troeger 1990:74; *cf.* also Thielicke 1978:58), "every meaning has a particular sound-posture, or to put it in another way, the sense of every meaning has a particular sound which each individual is instinctively familiar with, and without at all being conscious of the exact words that are being used is able to understand the thought, idea or emotion that is being conveyed." Thus, to witness convincingly about God requires a tonality which does not contradict the encounter that the preacher had with God, and does not smack of hypocrisy. This is not possible if the sermon is delivered only as a printed document that is being read to the audience. In this sense, the voice of the preacher who calls out the presence of God is an "aural symbol," which "gives witness to the wonder and ineffability of God by being alive with the wonder and ineffability of human personality as expressed by the best physical qualities of spoken language. The preacher's voice uses words and the physical properties of sound to draw people beyond the message that is being articulated into the presence of God" (Troeger 1990:69,71).

10.4.4 St Paul's example of witnessing about the divine presence

So far, we have examined the preacher's triple consciousness in relation to preaching of the divine presence. In this section, we shall now look at St. Paul's example of witnessing in

the New Testament, as he demonstrates how his consciousness of the living God, as well as of the audience, influences his actual delivery of the Gospel.

For the Apostle Paul, to proclaim the Word of God is something that always takes place before the living God: "I solemnly charge you *in the presence of God* and of Christ Jesus and of His chosen angels, to maintain these principles without bias, doing nothing in a spirit of partiality" (NASB 1 Tim 5:21, 6:13; 2 Tim 4:1). While aware of God's presence in the very moment of preaching, not only does he proclaim the Gospel, but also instructs Timothy to do so with the same awareness: "Remind them of these things, and solemnly charge them *in the presence of God* not to wrangle about words" (NASB 2 Tim 2:14).

In addition, His awareness of Christ who speaks through him (2 Cor 13:3) leads St Paul to preach the Gospel in an outstanding oratorical style. To begin with, his sincerity about the truth of God derives from his awareness of Him while preaching: "Unlike so many, we do not peddle the Word of God for profit. On the contrary, in Christ we speak before God with sincerity, like men sent from God" (NIV 2 Cor 2:17). His unique style of preaching, which resulted from his awareness of God's presence in preaching, becomes clearer in 1 Corinthians 2:1-5:

When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling. My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power.

According to Lim (1987:145), Paul here has the false Corinthian teachers in mind, who, like the sophist, "employed eloquence in their preaching and exacted material support from their audience." For the Corinthian false preachers, who profited from their preaching, it was important to employ eloquence and superior wisdom in their preaching in terms of their "plausible right" to profit from their congregation (Barrett 1972:103; Lim 1987:143-145). However, in Paul's view, the practice of preaching that focused on external eloquence of oratory, or on human wisdom of words, in preaching, primarily for remuneration, was an adulteration of the truth. In contrast to these orators, for Paul, most important in preaching, was the mystery of God, that is, Jesus Christ who was crucified, resurrected, and was still alive at the very moment of proclaiming Him. The speech regarding this mystery of God must be revelatory, not superficially persuasive; it cannot be learnt, as it cannot be taught as a technique to be mastered by craftsmen, such as persuasive rhetoricians. This wisdom of God, as mystery, must be revealed and talked about only among initiates to whom God has revealed the mystery through His Spirit. For this reason, St Paul regards the work of the

Holy Spirit as a *sine qua non* for proclaiming the mystery of God.

This awareness of the human impossibility in preaching also leads to Paul's weakness, fear and much trembling. Harrisville (1987:48) understands this fear and trembling as a sign of acknowledging 'epiphany,' an acknowledgment that the autonomy of faith belongs only to God: Jesus was crucified in weakness, yet he lives by God's power. "Likewise, we are weak in him, yet by God's power we will live with him to serve you" (2 Cor 13:4). This humble recognition is in direct opposition to the self-confident and boastful stance of the other Corinthian preachers (Lim 1987:147). Contrary to the Corinthian false preachers, Paul asserts that his word and his preaching are based upon a demonstration, not of the rhetorical kind, but of the Spirit and of power. The term, "demonstration," is used in a court of law for testimony, and signifies that no one can refute the presented proof (Kistemaker 1993:75). In conclusion, Paul witnesses about God and His Gospel according to this awareness, of which the following is crucial: not by eloquence and superior wisdom, but by the work of the Holy Spirit who works in his preaching and makes his message irrefutable.

10.5 The Korean preacher's mediatory role: Hierarchical vs. incarnational

Thus far, we have discussed the normative foundation for the preacher's role in preaching the divine presence. With this in mind, we defined the position of the preacher mainly in terms of his/her being in-between God and the audience; the role of the preacher as mediator; the three qualities (spiritual, vertical and horizontal) that he/she must be aware of in witnessing about God's divine presence, the audience (integrity and *ethos*), and self (a convincing voice that reflects a subjective but authentic engagement with God). Based upon this normative foundation, we shall now make some strategic suggestions for Korean preaching, mainly in relation to both an appropriate understanding of their role as preachers and sermon plagiarism.

When we examine the Korean preachers in the light of the above normative homiletical foundation and the religio-cultural inclination of the Korean church, which is prone to emphasize the hierarchical and mediatory role of a leader in any community, an aspect that needs urgent attention is the appropriate meaning of preachers' mediatory role. As mentioned before, Korean Shamanism, which still exerts a resilient influence on the Korean subconsciousness, endorses the importance of a leader as crucial, since a leader (who is regarded in the extended line of a shaman) is supposed to have the charismatic power to mediate transcendence to followers (1.2.1.3). Thus, Korean congregations tend to see "the preacher's image and authority to be like that of a shaman," a figure whom the Shamanistic believer cherishes.

They consciously or unconsciously expect their preacher to communicate with spirits and to help them cope with their problems by provoking the power of the Holy Spirit in their lives. In other words, they want the preacher to be a spiritual leader who is closer to God than they are and who can better communicate with the Holy Spirit. In this way, they often give credit to the preacher on the basis of the sermon's spiritual power to transform their whole lives (EJ Kim 1997:32; *cf.* JY Lee 1997:73).

The Confucian background further enhances this undue emphasis upon a preacher that endorses the hierarchical order of an elder in a community. From the Confucian background, "The idea of respecting a king, teacher, and father is so strongly emphasized that even pastors are given great authority and respect in society" (SM Kang in BR Ro [eds] 1983:305). "Confucian hierarchical values" also play an important role "in deciding the authority of a preacher" (JY Lee 1997:95). "In this hierarchical system, many preachers regard themselves as heralds of God who are sent by God from above. The congregation is expected to accept the words from the preacher's mouth as the Word of God and to obey the preacher's instructions humbly" (EM Kim 1999:20).

Combined with their religio-cultural background, Korean congregations' preference for, and expectation of, spiritual experience in preaching often challenges preachers to be diligent in disciplining their spirituality through prayer and biblical study, and to play a crucial role in mediating transcendence in a preaching context (*cf.* EJ Kim 1997:32-33). In a sense, it is not too much to say that one reason for the Korean church's growth is the Korean pastors and preachers who did their best in their pastoral responsibility (*cf.* CI Kim in BR Ro [eds] 1983:248). However, when the role of a preacher is overemphasized to such an extent that the normative function of the Bible is blurred, then His presence cannot but suffocate under the preacher's dominant image. Thus, instead of remaining highly elevated and imperial figures, the preachers, who want to mediate the presence of God, should descend to the congregational level. This is a way of meeting the contemporary Korean congregation "who want to understand preaching from an egalitarian and reciprocal perspective" (EJ Kim 1997:20).

As we have explained in 10.4, the preachers' witness of the divine presence should be firmly based upon their preceding engagement with God from whom they can acquire the necessary spirituality (before God), integrity (before the audience), and conviction (before self). This established triple consciousness constitutes a crucial sermonic web in which they may witness about God's presence. Moreover, we have concluded that when preachers' witness in the pulpit engages their real struggle with the Gospel, the audience may regard it as a sincere model of how they, too, can deal with the 'darkness' in their own lives. For this reason, Korean preachers' should overcome an authoritative and hierarchical swamp, and

descend to the level of the audience through their incarnational role of showing how to deal with 'darkness' in the engagement with God in life. With an understanding of preachers' mediatory role in this incarnational model, one can rectify problems, such as impersonal and authoritative sermons, or even sermon plagiarism, all of which are brought about by an inappropriate understanding of the mediatory role of preachers when witnessing about the presence of God.

10.6 Conclusion

So far, we have discussed the normative foundation for the preacher's role in the preaching of the divine presence. Concerning this normative foundation, we first defined the preacher's position mainly as in-between God and the audience, and the preacher's role mainly as a verbal and mediatory witness. In addition, the preacher's triple consciousness in witnessing was discussed: spirituality (before God), integrity (before the audience) and conviction (before self). While examining being conscious of God mainly in terms of spirituality, we discussed the importance of spiritual practices, through which preachers' vertical encounter with God is enhanced by their horizontal embodiment toward others. The preachers' consciousness of the audience was examined in relation to their integrity and *ethos* that reflect their personal engagement with God. Thirdly, the importance of preachers' convincing voice was stressed when we discussed the exigency and authenticity of their preceding encounter with God. As a case in point showing how this triple consciousness affects preachers' actual delivery mode, we examined St Paul example of preaching.

Lastly, with this concern in mind, we made some strategic suggestions regarding the role of Korean preachers, mainly in terms of their incarnational witness about God, their mediatory role, as well as a more egalitarian and exemplary ideal corresponding to the congregation's engagement and struggle with the mysterious and problematic divine presence-in-absence. In this sense, we could say that, if preachers do not consider the audience, their preaching efforts might be in vain. For this reason, we now attend to the question how the audience should be involved when preaching the divine presence.

Chapter eleven

The role of the audience when preaching the divine presence

11.1 Introduction

Our homiletical discussion of the preaching of the divine presence raises a final question: How should we understand the audience in this regard? Without a proper understanding of the audience, preaching of the divine presence loses its target and sphere. Thus, in this last chapter we shall establish a normative understanding of how the audience can be involved when preaching the divine presence. We shall then make some strategic suggestions on this subject, especially in relation to Korean preaching.

When we examine the role of the audience, a number of questions arise. The first concerns the homiletical identity of the audience. With this question in mind, we shall examine the audience especially in relation to the other three components of preaching, i.e. God, the Bible and the preacher.

The second question that arises concerns the sphere or realm wherein the preaching of the divine presence takes place. If we are to describe the identity of the audience in some way, then, where does the preaching of the divine presence occur? What target does this preaching have in mind? In order to answer these questions, we shall first examine the audience with regard to the following three dimensions of the reception of the Word: as an individual, as the church, and as one who belongs to the world. We shall then examine the sermonic sphere of the preaching of the divine presence with the following three emphases that in turn reflect the abovementioned three dimensions of the reception of the Word: an individual inner sphere, an ecclesial sphere and the secular sphere.

Lastly, we need to examine the rhetorical strategy of preaching in the light of the previous two questions: If we describe the audience in relation to the preaching of the divine presence, then, what is the rhetorical strategy that best reflects this understanding of the homiletical identity of the audience? Based upon these three discussions, we shall make a number of strategic suggestions in relation to Korean preaching.

11.2 A definition of the audience relative to the other three components of preaching

Many homileticians have emphasized the audience, theologically or communicatively, as constituting a crucial homiletical axis in preaching (Bohren 1980:443ff; Van der Geest 1981:62; Craddock 1985:22ff; Wardlaw in Van Seters [ed] 1988:64ff; Long 1989:22ff,55; Bailey 1991:60; Theissen 1995:105ff; Tisdale 1997). For example, Bohren (1980:453ff)

defines the audience in more theological terms, as related to both God, the prime Audience, and to the preacher, who has to interpret the audience as the second text. With the audience's relationship with the preacher in mind, Van der Geest (1981:28ff) rather examines the audience in the communicative terms of the audience's three sermonic needs: their dimensions of security, deliverance, and understanding. Craddock (1985:86ff) describes this in pastoral terms: the listener as audience and as congregation; and Long (1989:55ff,113ff) does so in a more exegetical and sermon-preparatory dimension. Lastly, Wardlaw (in Van Seters [ed] 1988:63ff), with a sermonic frame in mind, identifies the audience in relation both to the preacher and the text.

If the audience is so important in constituting preaching, our concomitant question is: How can we define the audience in relation to our theme of preaching the divine presence? When we try to define the audience in this regard, the figure below (fig. 11) offers an appropriate point of departure, as it indicates that the audience must be comprehensively understood in relation to the other three components of preaching, i.e. in relation to God (⑥), the Bible (⑤), and the preacher (④). Thus, in this section, we shall define the audience in relation to these three components of preaching.

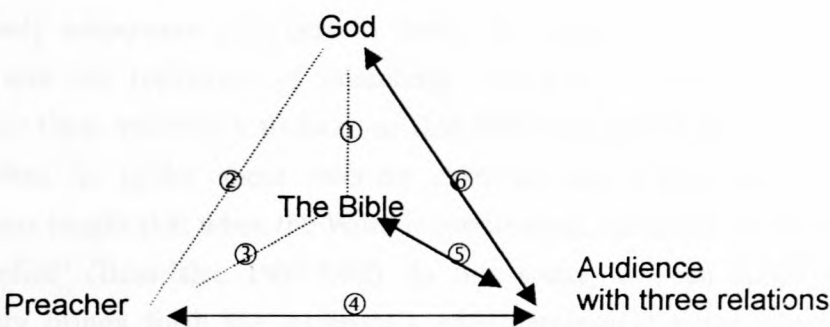


FIG. 11 THE AUDIENCE IN RELATION TO THE OTHER THREE ELEMENTS OF PREACHING

11.2.1 The audience in relation to God: A theological entity

A crucial dimension of the audience lies in its relation to the God with whom the congregation engages during the sermon. Bohren's view is of assistance in this regard. For him (*cf.* 1980:443ff,467ff), the audience should be creatively described as people who stand before God, in other words, people who must be viewed in terms of divine predestination. By viewing preaching in relation to the presence of God, Bohren (*cf.* 1980:454) also understands the congregation directly in relation to the God who, as the prime Audience in preaching, not only listens to the preacher's naming of Him, but who also, in divine predestination, has a plan and will for the congregation. Given divine predestination, the

audience should be perceived neither as a communicative consumer whose worldly interests must be gratified, nor as a passive listener to whom preaching should never pay any sermonic consideration. Because audiences are called, theologically and communicatively, and saved as responsible beings before God, their spontaneous answerability to the Word of God should also be taken into consideration in preaching. Lischer (1981:92) views this answerability of the audience to the Word of God, which is embedded inside the image of God, as the aspect that makes preaching possible: "Christian anthropology, with its theology of the Image, lays the groundwork for an ethical understanding of preaching as a work of love whose effectiveness lies in its ability to enkindle Christ-like love in others" (1981:93). In viewing the audience in relation to God, we must not only overcome two extreme views of the audience, i.e. the audience-centred-sermon and the audience-ignoring-sermon, but also find an appropriate frame to define the audience in terms of theological anthropology. As Louw (1999:146) rightly points out, theological anthropology offers a foundation to interpret a human being in relationship with God.

Moreover, by viewing the audience in relation to God, we can also define the audience in terms of pneumatology that actualizes the audience's relationship with God in preaching. The Holy Spirit not only empowers preachers in order to bridge the gap between the miracle of preaching and the technique of preaching, but also illuminates audiences internally so as to attract them spiritually to God, so that they can hear His Word. This is what Calvin meant when he spoke about *minister externus* and *doctor internus* (cf. 10.3.2.1). "The Reformers taught that when the Word is proclaimed, the Spirit works within the hearer to effect belief" (Beardslee 1989:24ff). In this sense, we can confirm that theological anthropology brings forth the audience's pneumatological being, especially within the preaching context.

In addition, when viewing the audience in relation to God, this perspective motivates us to also review the audience in relation to the world. In other words, although, according to divine predestination, congregations are saved by God, theological anthropology must also be understood in the light of eschatology. Congregations must be viewed as still being in the world, thus, in a theological and hermeneutical tension with God - still struggling against the (fallen) world until the last day. With this eschatological tension in mind, Buttrick (1987:41) suggests that "every congregation must be regarded as being-saved in the world; thus congregations have a peculiar double consciousness." On the one hand, they are constituted in liturgy as 'people of God,' who are satisfied by listening to the Word of their heavenly Father. On the other hand, they and we are 'in the world,' thus, share certain secular ways of understanding. Because we are *in* but not *of* the world, "we never preach to

people who are perfectly whole or hopelessly corrupt but only to those who are being healed or getting sick” (Lischer 1981:56). In brief, “Preaching will have to speak to a double consciousness” (Buttrick 1987:41). Given these double dimensions of the audience, we need to view the congregation in the light of both theological and eschatological anthropology, in which these dimensions and tensions are harmoniously esteemed.

11.2.2 The audience in relation to the Bible: A hermeneutical entity

In addition to the abovementioned theological and eschatological tension, the audience can also be defined as a being in a hermeneutical tension with the Bible. On the one hand, the hermeneutical distance between the Bible and the audience is so small that, when preachers preach from the Bible, the audience may echo the preachers’ words in their hearts saying “Yes, that is it; that is our message; that is our faith” (*cf.* Craddock 1985:44). In short, the audience is a people of the Bible, and its message is theirs (*cf.* Jh 10:14). On the other hand, they are in a state of hermeneutical tension with the Bible. Although the Bible is theirs, its living message is hidden and far from them, so that in preaching the hermeneutical bridge between them should be crossed repeatedly. In order to overcome this gap, many hermeneutical frames have been being suggested and examined. In our study, we briefly discussed this hermeneutical gap in 9.4.1, and examined Buttrick’s double hermeneutics that reflect a theological anthropology of being-saved-in-the-world as an appropriate hermeneutical frame to bridge the two worlds (*cf.* Buttrick 1998:277-278). Through this hermeneutical frame of double consciousness, the gap between the two worlds seems to be appropriately bridged.

However, this expectation must be held in check by the Bible’s other dimension, i.e. the Bible’s sacramental function to mediate God. As stated before (*cf.* 9.2.1, 2), the Bible mediates God’s presence and His Spirit in a Christian narrative frame (9.2.1). Since the Bible must be understood in a sacramental perspective that confirms the theological tension between the finite and infinite, the homiletical relation between the Bible and the audience should also admit the hermeneutical tension between the two.

This hermeneutical tension requires the audience to engage continuously in a hermeneutical endeavour and activity to sense and find, anew, the divine presence in relation to their own lives. According to Louw (1999:140,182), “the essential qualities which humans possess as creatures of God pose a question about the goal, direction, destination and meaning of our human existence.” “Throughout our lives we keep looking for a pattern, a meaning that flashes now and then into sight but finally keeps eluding us”(1999:140,182). Thus, “when the preacher stands in the pulpit, we expect some light to be thrown on our quest” (Troeger 1990:90). “The people in a worship service want to have light offered to them in the

darkness of their lives; they want to see the hopelessness of day to day life, of life in this world, surpassed by a perspective which can't be found in that day to day life itself" (Van der Geest 1981:70-71). In conclusion, given this gap between the audience and the Bible, we need to define the audience as a hermeneutical entity who, as a "telic being," must engage continually in the hermeneutical activity of the Bible to find God's presence anew in their lives.

11.2.3 The audience in relation to the preacher: A communicative entity

In preaching, the audience should also be understood in relation to the preacher. This relation is sustained within the communicative axis that involves three components of communication: message, sender, and receiver (*cf.* Theissen 1995:105ff). Accordingly, it seems that we should examine the audience's relation with the preacher mainly in terms of a communication or reader-response model that describes the communicative process between the two. Communication models can be developed with great complexity to acknowledge all kinds of social, psychological, and even acoustical matters but, in essence, they reduce to a sender, a receptor, and a code in between (Buttrick 1998:175).

When examining the audience's relationship with the preacher in the light of a communication model, it is helpful to remember our previous discussion of religious language; language that constitutes a communicative medium between sender and receptor. As examined in 8.3.2.1, the cognitive-propositional view of religious language presupposes that successful communication is totally dependent upon the clarity and accuracy of the word, i.e. the medium in-between, and seems to legitimize the cognitive-content-centred-preaching tradition that emphasizes the identity between what the preacher says and what the audience receives. "Presumably, if word signs are accurate, speakers adept, and listeners attentive, a perfect exchange of thoughts should occur" (Buttrick 1998:176).

In this vein, Myron Chartier and David Wells formulate the audience's relationship with the preacher mainly in the communication model as the figure below shows (fig 12, David Wells in Stylianopoulos [ed] 1983:58; *cf.* Myron Chartier 1981:24-25). In this communication model, revelation is depicted in a sender-code-receptor line. "God is understood as a Sender, and the Bible is viewed as God's word code, and the preacher decodes from scripture God's rational truth. Usually, the work of the Holy Spirit is associated with subjective factors which enable us to rightly decode and hear" (Buttrick 1998:176; *cf.* David Wells in Stylianopoulos [ed] 1983:65-67).

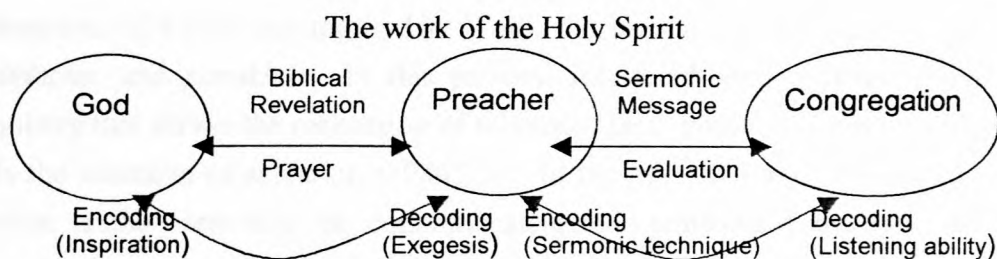


FIG. 12 DAVID WELLS'S COMMUNICATION MODEL OF PREACHING

However, this content-centred-communication model falls flat when the word, the medium of communication in-between comes into question. As mentioned before, human languages are no longer regarded as being rooted in objective realities, but are subject to such meaning as the user sees fit to attribute to them (*cf.* 8.3.2.1). In addition, the medium of a communication process does not presuppose to be constituted only by linguistic content; it rather also involves a relational dimension between the two points of communication (Chartier 1981:25,77ff; Theissen 1995:106ff; Resner 1999). With this aspect in mind, Babin (1991:77-78) rightly insists, "Communication is participating, not saying." It has to participate in the counter partner. Thus, "What gives a communication a guarantee that it will last is the recognition of a shared spirit which the partners have to obey. The guiding principle here is not affectivity, but the dominant necessity of that spirit: the spirit recognized in each partner's own history and past commitment, the spirit seen as leading each partner to offer his or her life for the other" (1991:98).

In addition to the participatory dimension of a communicative relationship, the audience's relationship with the preacher should also involve the divine dimension of communication, since this communicative relationship in our study is about preaching the divine presence. With this aspect in mind, for example, Van der Geest (1981:61) rightly formulates the communicative relationship between the preacher and the audience mainly in terms of the Lord's communion with people in faith. For him, "the communication between the preacher and the audience is the place where the communion of Lord and people in faith takes place." In this communicative axis, the sermonic content taken on its own is not an essential element, in fact, it occurs in the relationship between preacher and audience; the content of the words has significance only within this framework.

Firet's understanding of pastoral role-fulfilment can enlighten this divine-relational aspect of the communicative axis between God, preacher and audience. According to Firet (1986:15), "at the heart of pastoral role-fulfilment as the official activity of the pastor is not the activity of a human being, but the action of God who, by way of the official ministry as intermediary, comes to people in his Word". Firet (1986:40ff) suggests the following three

ecclesial structures of God's coming in His Word, the lines along which it takes place: *kerygma*, *didache*, and *paraklesis*. In this pastoral role-fulfilment, as exercised in the ecclesial ministry that serves the realization of salvation, God, coming to His people in His Word, holds the initiative of salvation (1986:212). In the light of Fier's discussion, what needs attention is the view that the communicative axis constituted by the audience's relationship with the preacher works as pastoral role-fulfilment that mediates the coming of God to His people. Given our subject of the preaching of the divine presence, the audience, as a communicative entity viewed in relation to the preacher, cannot be seen merely in a naïve mechanical placing of itself against the preacher; rather, as figure 13 below indicates, the audience must be seen as involving God who is present, as the first Speaker and Audience (*cf.* Bohren 1980:454).

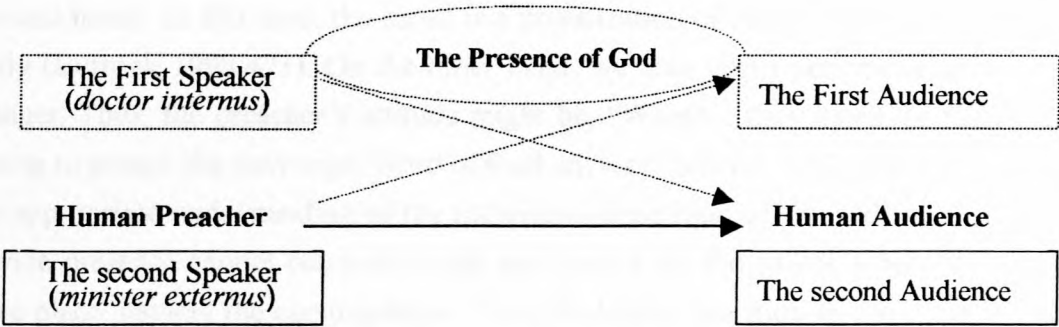


FIG. 13: THE AUDIENCE'S COMMUNICATIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD AND THE PREACHER

Because the audience's relationship with the preacher constitutes a communicative axis through which God is present to both, the congregation's communicative relationship with the preacher should also involve God, the first Speaker and Audience. Within this comprehensive relationship, the divine components of the witness about God, such as the work of the Spirit or a preacher's consciousness of God's presence in preaching, fall into place. In conclusion, we can therefore define the audience's communicative entity, not only in relation to the preacher, but also in relation to the presence of God.

11.3 The audience's three dimensions of the reception of the Word

Thus far, we have defined the audience in relation to the other three components of preaching: God (a theological, pneumatological and eschatological entity), the Bible (a hermeneutical entity), and the preacher (a communicative entity). In addition to these definitions, we can also approach the audience according to the sermon's effect on them. In order to examine this effect, we appropriated Bohren's (*cf.* 1980:551-552) view of the sermon's effect, which can be described in three dimensions: individual, ecclesial, and

socio-political. Based upon this categorization, we analysed the effect of five sermons. In order to develop our discussion of the sphere of the divine presence, in this part of our study, we shall also define the audience following the three dimensions of the reception of the Word: as an individual, as the church, and as one who belongs to the world, or: an individual inner sphere, an ecclesial sphere, and the socio-political sphere.

11.3.1 The audience as individual beings

As implied before, when discussing the audience mainly in terms of individuals, the homiletical traps that we should avoid are both the audience-centred-sermon that gratifies the individualistic dimension of the audience and the audience-ignoring-sermon that does not pay appropriate attention to the audience's individual aspects. On the one hand, the sermon may be delivered to an individual in such a way as to satisfy his/her private and mental needs. In this case, the result is a privatization of Jesus Christ as a personal saviour only (Buttrick 1998:421). On the other hand, we may go to extreme lengths to avoid this danger. Thus, the preacher's attitude might be, "Whether they listen, or fail to listen I am going to preach the sovereign Word of God anyway" (*cf.* Ez 2:5,7, 3:11). However, without an appropriate understanding of the individual dimension of the audience, proclaiming the divine presence cannot reach its target and cannot fill the sphere where it actually should take place, namely the congregation. Then, the logical question is: How can we understand this individual dimension of the audience, especially in relation to our subject of preaching the divine presence?

The audience, as a gathering of individuals, can be examined in various ways. In our study, we shall examine the audience as individuals mainly in terms of theological anthropology, which was already suggested when examining the audience in relation to God (*cf.* 11.2.1). As discussed before, theological anthropology signifies an individual's relationship to God, and from this relationship his/her other human dimensions and relations are legitimized. However, when we understand an individual in terms of theological anthropology, it needs additional clarification, because, for example, Christological anthropology, as a kind of theological anthropology, is inapt for our discussion. As Louw (1999:122,137,170) rightly points out, "Whoever attempts to build an anthropology based exclusively on a Christology, risks diminishing the uniqueness of Christ's conciliatory work so that it becomes only a model of perfect humanity." This is a typical flaw found in moralistic sermons.

With this limitation of an inappropriate theological anthropology in mind, Louw (1999:168ff) suggests pneumatological and eschatological anthropology as a relevant pastoral anthropology. When we view the audience as individuals, but in the light of pneumatology and eschatology, we can admit the following comprehensive dimensions of

human beings: physical, mental, cognitive, conative, affective, moral, and spiritual, all of which harmoniously engage with one another. In a pneumatological frame, the physical dimension of a human being receives a new worth, which can be legitimized in such a way as to be used for the reception of the Word of God in preaching. "In terms of the pneumatology, the new person's potential is called *charisma*. The encounter between the Spirit and the human focuses on personality traits anew" (Louw 1999:172). In addition, in an eschatological frame, the audience's tension with (an absent) God can be overcome in anticipating the consummation of God's salvation, whilst the indwelling Spirit leads an ongoing process of sanctification (*cf.* Louw 1999:121-122).

11.3.2 The audience as a communal being

If we examine the audience with a preaching context in mind, our discussion cannot remain focused on the individual only; it should rather involve the congregation with its communal dimension, which can be understood and utilized in various ways. First, in terms of humanness: an individual cannot be appropriately understood apart from the community to which he/she belongs. Whilst people in the pre-modern world understood themselves communally, and modernity turned toward individualism and anthropocentrism, "Communality is a part of the vision of many postmodern people. They regard communal relationships as constitutive of human identity" (Allen [eds] 1997:140). In a postmodern worldview, people continually affect other people and their circumstances in the world. Human beings affect, and are affected by, other entities. Thus, "The individual-in-community is the primary unit of humanness. Any description of the individual apart from his or her community deals only with part process, with a fragment of a unitary whole" (Augsburger 1986:108-110; *cf.* Allen [eds] 1997:141). Referring to Charles Williams's view of the individual-in-community, Holmes III (1976:19) rightly points out the notion of the 'corporate person' in accordance with theological anthropology:

What lay behind this understanding was the Hebrew concept of the corporate person: the individual embodies the community, and the community is responsible for the individual. For example: What possible justification could the Lord have for destroying the entire household of Dathan and Abiram, because these two men revolted against Moses (Num 16:1-35)? ... Perhaps most dramatically: What is the dynamic of human nature that all die in Adam and all are made alive in Christ (1 Cor 15:22)? The answer in each instance is the "corporate person."

Here, the fact that the power of salvation is transmitted from one person to another in a communal context needs our attention. In the New Testament's view, to be human is to live in a city, the heavenly city or new Jerusalem (Rev 21:1-27). It is clearly a place in which the unity of humans with God is established (Holmes III 1976:20). For this reason, the

audience, seen as individual listeners only, falls short of the biblical definition of the people of God, with whom the preaching of the Word engages in a communal context.

Both the ecclesial prerequisite of Christian narrative and the Bible's ecclesial intention to construct the gathered community, shed light on the communal dimension of the audience. In the previous discussion of the Christian narrative, we mentioned that this narrative not only sustains the church when preachers proclaim the presence of God, but, in reverse, this proclamation also needs the Christian community to guide the preacher in how to witness about the presence of God (*cf.* 8.4.2.2). Thus, without a communal and ecclesial foundation, Christian narrative cannot but be subject to individual interpretative limitations that manipulate God's presence according to individuals' vested interests. Thus, the divine presence loses its performative power to nurture the faith community through the Word of God. According to Babin (1991:73,97), "The ultimate aim of communication is the spiritual fruitfulness of the partners, so as to build up the covenant between people and God." In these terms, "Repentance and conversion mean that an individual's heart has changed and he or she is converted to the universal sodality as the ethos of existence" (1991:73). For this reason, the audience's communal dimension should be constantly kept in mind when proclaiming the divine presence, in order also to produce and nurture an ecclesial communion. The dialogue between God, the preacher, and the audience constitutes ecclesial communion in which the spiritual fruitfulness of the communicative partners is, not individually, but ecclesially, experienced.

11.3.3 The audience as one who engages in the world

When the Word of God is preached to the audience, this Word cannot stop either within the inner heart of an individual listener - as the experiential expressive sermon tends to do - or within the walls of the inner church - as a fundamental and exclusive sermon does. It must rather be engaged in the world where the audience belongs, and the grace and truth of God for this world should be revealed. According to Van Seters ([ed] 1988:19) "Individuals have been treated as if they could be separated from their corporate reality. With this separation the world becomes merely a backdrop to God's personal encounter with individuals as though the entire world is profane, no longer part of God's creation." On the contrary, "Preaching to the church is a form of public discourse in which God is recognized as being related to human beings not just individually but in the full context of their existence. The Word of God addresses us in our personal lives and also as members of the larger social world of which we are a part. We may speak of God as personal, but do we also acknowledge God as fully social and radically present in the world?" (Van Seters:1989:20). Thus, in preaching, the audience should be appreciated not only as an ecclesial being but

also as a socio-political being that belongs to the socio-political reality of the world.

If we esteem the audience as those engaged in a socio-political identity, then our next question is: What does this socio-political view of the audience entail for the preaching of the divine presence? This question concerns the audience's socio-political identity that the preacher has to consider when preaching. In our study, we shall examine this matter in view of a bilateral focus both on the centrifugal and the centripetal calling of the church, which were examined in Oak's view of the congregation (*cf.* 5.2.5.1).

On the one hand, audiences are called from the world according to the grace of God. This is what the theological and eschatological anthropology of being-saved-in-the-world means, as discussed in 11.2.1. Christians are saved by God; however, they are still in the world, struggling with the existential matters of their lives and searching for meaning. Because of this paradoxical identity, "They want to see real life taken into consideration with the hard facts not bracketed out" (Van der Geest 1981:69). "Those in a worship service have their questions, their skepticism, their temptation. If they don't feel those taken seriously, then they don't feel spoken to or addressed and there is no trust or joy" (1981:29). With this in mind, Riegert (1990:132) rightly insists upon the sermonic importance of the interpretation of life:

Interpreting life theologically means taking up the experience itself as the arena in which God is at work. William Muehl stressed the urgent need for preaching "to interpret the human situation in ways that make sense to thoughtful men and women." Preachers must, he declares, "claim their proper role as creative theologians and begin to work thoughtfully with the complex dimensions of human experience, not by exhorting their congregations to read scholarly tomes or to simply participate more frequently in Bible study, but by helping people to see the depth and meaning of the mundane, the true profundity of what may appear at first glance to be secular superficiality.

In similar vein, Brueggemann (in Van Seters [ed] 1988:142) insists, "The congregation is gathered to see if the old memory can be articulated in ways that reconfigure our present social reality of affluence and competence, of fear and brutality, of restlessness and despair." Thus, "It is important to most listeners that the worship service and especially the sermon guide them to insight into the existential problems of their lives" (Van der Geest 28). 1981:

On the other hand, audiences are also called from the world in order to be sent to the world. Thus, when they are provided with an alternative world in which the ambiguity of their lives acquires some direction, they feel "a sense that the convolution of their lives form into some pattern of meaning before God" (Troeger 1990:90ff). Through receiving direction by

Christian narrative, the audiences, who were called from the world and sent to the world, find an alternative dream to “make the preached Word of God become flesh and dwell in the world” (EM Kim 1999:13). According to Cilliers (2001), “Preaching does not begin and end with the sermon; the congregation precedes the preaching and follows it up with an Amen! But this amen is not the end of the sermon, rather a new beginning – so that the congregation themselves now become preachers in a world that waits to hear the gospel.” When audiences are equipped with an alternative infrastructure in which the meaning of life is theologically understood, and this new perspective exercises its performative power in their lives, the scales fall from the eyes, and the divine presence is recognized in His dwelling place in the world.

11.4 The audience as the sphere for preaching the Divine presence

We have defined the audience in terms of its relationship with the other three sermonic components: God (a theological, pneumatological and eschatological entity), the Bible (a hermeneutical entity), and the preacher (a communicative entity), and of the audience’s three dimensions of the reception of the Word: as an individual, a communal and a socio-political being. If we define the audience in these ways, then the following questions are: How can the preaching of the divine presence engage the audience? And, where does this preaching of the divine presence take place? These questions concern the relationship between the audience and the sphere of the preaching of the divine presence. Without an appropriate understanding of the sphere where the actual preaching takes place, our homiletical discussion of this subject will lose its pragmatic ground, and our preaching may end in docetic sermonizing that ignores the practical reality of the divine presence. With this in mind, Thielicke (1978:129) insists, “spiritual processes cannot be described without emphasis upon the place where they can occur.” Based upon our previous definitions of the audience, we shall examine the sphere where the preaching of the divine presence should take place and have effect in terms of the following three dimensions of the audience: an individual inner sphere, an ecclesial sphere and an outer public sphere.

11.4.1 The individual inner sphere of the divine presence

11.4.1.1 The human heart is to receive the Word of God

In preaching that intends to point out the presence of God, individuals in the audience are the initial sphere in which this presence of God could be actualized. The most crucial sphere of an individual is his/her human heart, which operates as the human receptor organ for God’s Word. Without taking this practical reality of the audience’s inner heart into consideration, preaching will inevitably end in docetism that presupposes a formless

phantom being. Every Word of God should pass into the inner heart of individuals in the audience.

The importance of the human heart as the practical human organ to receive the Word of God can be abundantly found in the biblical view of the heart. Jesus also speaks of ‘the heart’ as the place where the Word of God must take root (Lk 8:12); also, the conversion of the heart (Lk 1:17); the heart as the place from which unclean things come (Mt 15:18,19); the hardening of the heart, its callousness (Mt 13:15, 15:8; Mk 3:5, 6:52), etc. In this vein, Calvin rightly insists that the human heart is determinative for the reception of the Word of God: “The Word is not received in faith when it merely flutters in the brain, but when it has taken deep root in the heart, and becomes an invincible bulwark to withstand and repel all the assaults of temptation” (Inst. III.2.36; *cf.* also I.5.9; III.6.4). After examining several New Testament passages, Ridderbos (1962:256) also points out, “The heart means the inner existence of man which determines his outward behavior, which is the center of his being, which must be converted, to which God’s Word is addressed and which is determinative of the question whether a man is good or evil.” Although the heart does not determine the substance of the Word of God, it offers the anthropological sphere in which the Word of God may encounter the human being, and in which God has His dwelling place.

11.4.1.2 Green’s paradigmatic imagination

If we confirm that the human heart is so important a place for an individual to receive the Word of God, then the next question is: How can the human heart be offered as a sphere for the divine presence? And: What sermonic function does the human heart fulfill in this regard? These questions concern the homiletical necessity and capacity of the human heart. We can find a clue to understand how the human heart works, also in the preaching of the divine presence, from Garret Green’s (1989:149) work about ‘paradigmatic imagination’. He suggests the latter as a contact point between a divine revelation and its human experience. In Green’s view, this imaginative work means mainly that it is the preacher’s task to mediate and facilitate an encounter with God to the audience by engaging his/her own imagination, which becomes the link between Scripture and congregation. However, in our study, the imaginative work must not necessarily be confined to the preacher only, but rather involve the audience as well, since the audience must also actively participate in an imaginative envisioning of God.¹³

In order to find an appropriate frame for the discussion of Garret Green’s work, we must first heed his view of the heart that he applies similarly to that of ‘paradigmatic

¹³ In regard to the communal imagination, *cf.* Troeger, in Van Seters (ed) 1988:217–218, and Riebert 1990:42ff.

imagination.' Based upon the biblical view of the heart, Green (1989:110) insists that the human heart is "the place where the Word of God dwells (Deut 30:14), the organ of faith (Rom 10:10). In summary we could say that according to these biblical writers the place where the image of God is newly impressed on the human being is the heart." In viewing the importance of the human heart as the receptor of the Word of God, Green notes that the biblical heart functions very much like the human imagination. In his view, the following two similarities between heart and imagination are especially important:

First, both heart and imagination are at once the seat of intellectual and emotional functions: the atheistic thoughts of the psalmist's fool are located in his heart (Ps. 14:1; 53:1), while the prophet can lament that his 'heart is poured out in grief' (Lam. 2:11). Second, the biblical heart like the paradigmatic imagination is capable of lies as well as trust: 'The heart is deceitful above all things (Jer. 17:9), yet the 'wise man's heart inclines him toward the right' (Eccles. 10:2). The most compelling arguments of all for taking the heart to be the biblical correlate of the paradigmatic imagination is its role as the *Anknüpfungspunkt*, the point at which human and divine come most immediately and concretely into contact (Green1989:109-110).

With the biblical view of the heart in mind, Green insists that human imagination, which can be understood to operate like a human heart, can also be the anthropological contact point between divine revelation and the human experience (Green 1989:4,34,42ff). Here, just like a human heart, human imagination is not the 'foundation,' the 'ground,' the 'pre-understanding,' or the 'ontological basis' for revelation; it is simply the place, like the human heart, where the Word of God dwells, where it happens (1989:40).

Green's understanding of the anthropological contact point of the human imagination, which operates in such a way as to connect a divine revelation with its human reception, can be further examined in the light of his phrase 'paradigmatic imagination.' In order to understand this term, we need to note what paradigm means in his view of imagination. In his view, 'paradigm,' which was suggested by a recent philosophy of science, can be concisely defined as a normative exemplar of constitutive structure. "Paradigms have a heuristic function, serving to reveal the larger patterns in broad areas of experience that might otherwise remain inaccessible because they appear incoherent or bewildering in their complexity" (Green 1989:67). When this view of paradigm is related to the human imagination as an anthropological contact point for a divine revelation, the paradigmatic imagination signifies "the ability of human beings to recognize in accessible exemplars the constitutive organizing patterns of other, less accessible and more complex objects of cognition" (1989:66). The point is that paradigmatic imagination makes accessible what would otherwise be unavailable to us. Based upon this discussion, we could suggest that

paradigmatic imagination can be considered as an operative method that God's presence impresses upon a human heart. Thus, just as the heart can be considered as an anthropological sphere for a contact point between the Word of God and its human reception, so the paradigmatic imagination can also be considered as an operative and practical way that the divine presence impresses and actualizes inside the heart of an individual listener.

Concerning the work of this paradigmatic imagination, we might raise a suspicious question about the accompanying reality resultant from such imaginative work: Is that which makes imagination accessible real or illusory? In this sense, the distinction between realistic and illusory uses of imagination is of importance in our discussion. Green introduces the following two illusory uses of imagination: fantastic as well as deceitful imagination. Fantastic imagination is deliberately fanciful, and acknowledges departures from the real world; deceitful imagination includes all attempts to falsify, distort, or misrepresent reality for the purpose of misleading one self or others. On the contrary, for Green (1989:105ff), paradigmatic imagination is based upon the normative foundation of the Bible, and works with the realistic imagination that comes into play when we engage with real objects that are not directly accessible to us.¹⁴

In order to show how realistic imagination comes into play with a real object that is not directly accessible, Green (1989:64) introduces the following three realistic uses of paradigmatic imagination: temporal absence, spatial absence, and logical inscrutability. Firstly, the clearest case of realistic imagination can be found in accessing "temporal absence," that is past reality, for which memory requires an act of imagination. Relative to our homiletical discussion, we need to remember that the mediatory preaching of the divine presence diachronically bridges the eschatological gap between the 'already' of the *paschal*-presence and the 'not yet' of the *parousia*-presence (cf. 10.3.3.2). Being provided by this diachronic bridge, we could suggest that paradigmatic imagination offers a clue to indirect and imaginative access to God's ultimate *parousia*-presence that is inaccessible to us at the moment. In this imaginative access, an important human act is remembrance of past reality and imagining of the future reality. Through remembrance and imagination of the presence of God, which is inaccessible at the moment, His presence can "become real" in the present tense. Thus, "without heart and its capacity for memory, the sense of the character of God grows vague since God's presence in Christ is to be found in the stories and their signs, which find its dwelling place in our hearts through the remembrance of

¹⁴ Several scholars have made a clear distinction between realistic imagination and illusive fantasy (Holmes 1976:101c, 102b; Green 1989:18c; Troeger 1990:28c; R Kennedy 1993:75; MA Johnson 1994:171).

what the past was. Thus, the loss of heart for Christians becomes experienced as a loss of God" (Eslinger 1995:34).

The second realistic use of imagination regarding empirical objects can involve "spatial inaccessibility," since it comes into play in situations where a real object is not directly accessible because of its spatial and physical distance from the observer. "The obvious cases are the ones in which I as the observer happen not to be in proximity to an object that I could perceive directly if I were; as long as I stay where I am, I can only imagine the inaccessible object" (Green 1989:64). Green introduces the microcosmic reality of physics and the macrocosmic realm of astrophysics, in which scientists must employ realistic imagination in order to describe the character of the microcosmic reality or universe as a whole, appealing to schemes of space-time involving four or more dimensions in order to do justice to their data. In a similar sense, the spatial inaccessibility of the divine presence can be overcome by the paradigmatic imagination that works upon God's omnipresence. In this vein, the psalmist confesses, "If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast" (Ps 139:8-10).

In addition to objects not present to us because of their temporal or spatial remoteness, there remains a class of real object whose inaccessibility can be recognized by its logical inscrutability. Spiritual beings, such as not only God, but also souls, Satan, or also gods, are suggested as belonging to this class. When we speak of some attribute of God or of these spiritual beings, "We often assume both that these objects are real and that they could not be directly present to us in such a way as to render imagination superfluous" (Green 1989:65). In this case, one of the ways to access the inscrutability of God is the paradigmatic imagination that offers an imaginary and metaphoric way to render it understandable to us. For example, the logical inscrutability of God, which includes the paradoxical and mysterious aspect of the divine-presence-in-absence, can be imaginatively approached by the eschatological paradigm that offers a way to bridge two extreme poles of the divine presence, i.e. credulity of the divine presence and cynicism of the divine absence. In short, paradigmatic imagination can be suggested as a way through which the human heart can offer a dwelling place for God among His people.

11.4.1.3 Paradigmatic imagination and Christian narrative

When we consider the human heart as an individual sphere for the divine presence and paradigmatic imagination as a practical way through which the presence of God finds a dwelling place inside an individual, then we might be tempted to consider paradigmatic

imagination as the crucial foundation for the realization of the divine presence. However, as we have already made clear, the term 'paradigmatic imagination' does not imply any 'ontological foundation,' 'ground,' 'pre-understanding,' or 'ontological basis' for the realization of the divine presence, also in preaching. It rather is an operative way in which God acquires a dwelling place for Himself in a human heart, also through the medium of preaching. In order to make this point clear, we need to view paradigmatic imagination in relation to the Bible and Christian narrative, which offers a normative foundation both for paradigmatic imagination and the preaching of the divine presence.

In the previous discussion of the Christian narrative, we pointed out that Christian narrative implemented to express God-images should be understood, not as a cognitive and dogmatic proposition about God that may be extracted from the Bible, but as a normative frame that plays a regulative role when witnessing about God in the church (*cf.* 8.4.2.1). Christian narratives used to preach the divine presence are normative in that they offer the church a normative and regulative frame in which to interpret, speak and witness about the Father, Son, Holy Spirit, etc. Thus, we as Christians in all ages, have been viewing the Bible as a unity according to a pattern in which all of its parts cohere and fit together.

This unity is something quite different from maintaining that all the biblical books contain a common theology, treat the same themes, or otherwise share some common 'essence'. It is to hold that the multifaceted strands of biblical tradition manifest a family resemblance, that they 'belong together,' that the pattern they present to the imagination in concert is different from, and greater than, their individual patterns (Green 1989:114).

With this greater interpretative frame of reference, the Scriptures operate as not to look at, but rather look through, lenses that refocus into an intelligible pattern what we see in the various parts of the Bible (*cf.* Calvin's *Inst.* I. 6.1; I 14.1). If we are to understand the Bible as a normative frame for the Christian narrative, this can be applied also to the paradigmatic imagination that strives to serve the preaching of the presence of God. In other words, the Bible offers a normative frame, not only for the Christian narrative, but also for paradigmatic imagination, through which God can find a dwelling place for Himself in the human heart (Johnston in Allen [eds] 1997:178). This claim can be described more precisely by saying that 'the Bible embodies the paradigm' through which an imaginative rendering of God can be firmly based on the divine revelation in the Bible (Green 1989:108). Without the Bible's normative frame, paradigmatic imagination will lose its use for preaching of the divine presence, and end in a willful or deceitful fancy in which the vested interest of the self might be gratified.

So far, we have examined the audience in view of the individual and the human heart, and

of the possibilities of paradigmatic imagination. We also confirmed the normative foundation of Scripture, through which imaginative preaching acquires a biblical foundation. We now turn to the ecclesial context in which imaginative preaching of the divine presence should take place.

11.4.2 The ecclesial sphere of the divine presence

According to Bohren (1980:290), the preacher's naming of God involves witnessing about Christ who is present both *in* and *as* the church: "To preach Jesus Christ as the One who is present now means to point to Him as the One who finds His present existence as the church, and thus who exists as the church." Through this view, Bohren implies the ecclesial locus of the divine presence in preaching. When we admit that preaching should also consider the church as an importance sphere where the presence of God must be proclaimed, this presupposition has three ramifications, concerning the following: the theological meaning of the divine presence in the church; ecclesial and liturgical structures; and the congregation's communal consciousness of the divine presence. Thus, in order to explain the ecclesial sphere of the divine presence in preaching, we must first examine Bonhoeffer's Christological view of the church as the presence of Christ in the world, which offers an appropriate theological foundation for our discussion. Based upon this view, we shall further examine the pastoral and liturgical frame that deepens our view of the church as the sphere of the divine presence. The congregational consciousness of the divine presence will also be examined.

11.4.2.1 Bonhoeffer's Christological view of the church as Christ's presence

Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945) offers a helpful theological foundation for our discussion of the church as a sphere for the divine presence in preaching. Bonhoeffer, a German Lutheran theologian, is well known for his radical concepts of Christianity, discipleship, worldliness, suffering, etc. However, studies on Bonhoeffer's homiletics are relatively rare in comparison with literature dealing with his other systematic theological subjects, not because Bonhoeffer did not pay much attention to preaching, but because the abovementioned concepts largely occupied the studies on him (Fant 1975:3). Only "*Bonhoeffer: Worldly preaching*" by Clyde Fant (1975) and "*Studien zur Homiletik Dietrich Bonhoeffers*" by Ernst Wendel (1985) offer comprehensive outlines of Bonhoeffer's homiletics.

For Bonhoeffer, Christ not only speaks the Word; He is the Word Himself (Fant 1975:25; Jh 1:1ff). Because Christ is the Word, He does not stand behind the sermon that proclaims the Word; He is present in the spoken Word of preaching (Bonhoeffer says He is the Word of

God both in the Bible and in preaching). However, in line with Luther, Bonhoeffer located the presence of Christ even more specifically in preaching than in the Bible. Thus, for him, the Word of God is essentially the Word that the church preaches, more than the written Word of God, the Bible. With this in mind, in his book, *The communion of saints*, Bonhoeffer (1963:161) says, "the Word is concretely present in the church as the Word of Scripture and of preaching – essentially as the latter." Moreover, in his book, *Christology*, he also emphasizes that Christ is present not only *in*, but also *as* the word of the church:

Christ is not only present *in* the word of the church but also *as* the word of the church, i.e., as the spoken word of preaching. "In the Word" might say too little, if it made it possible to separate Christ from His Word. Christ's presence is his existence as preaching. The whole Christ is present in preaching, Christ humiliated and Christ exalted. Preaching is the form of the presence of Christ to which we are found and to which we have to keep (1966:52).

Bonhoeffer's stern insistence that the proclaimed Christ is the real Christ walking amidst His people seems to be an overstatement. However, a valid foundation for this suggestion may be drawn from the fact that the world could know no other Christ than the One whom the church proclaims. Only through the proclaimed Word in the church is the world able to recognize God, and be reconciled with Him. Moreover, for Bonhoeffer, the divine mandate of the church to proclaim the Gospel confirms this insistence, as does also Karl Barth's homiletics. In his *Ethics*, Bonhoeffer (1955:259) asserts, "the mandate which is given to the Church is the mandate of proclamation. God desires a place in which His Word is repeatedly spoken, expounded, interpreted and disseminated until the end of the world." This divine mandate offers a valid authority for Christ's presence in the preaching of the church (Mt 28:20).

Moreover, when the Holy Spirit gives the mandate to the church to proclaim the Word of Christ, for Bonhoeffer, the locus of Christ's presence in the world can be found, not only in the verbal proclamation of the Word by the church, but also in the visible congregation gathered by, and for, the Word of God (*cf.* Fant 1975:38,127). Thus, for him, the church and congregation gathered by and for the Word is the visible sphere of Christ's presence in the world. In this vein, Bonhoeffer (1963:197) "did not believe in an invisible church, nor in the kingdom of God existing in the church as *coetus electorum*, but he believed that God has made the actual empirical church ... that is the presence of Christ in the world." In *The cost of discipleship*, Bonhoeffer (1959:185,187) also says, "We should think of the church not as an institution, but as a person, though of course a person in a unique sense. The church is One Man; it is the body of Christ. But it is also many, a fellowship of members." This body of Christ, as the *communio sanctorum*, offers the ecclesial locus for the presence

of Christ on earth and, therefore, is visible to the world. According to Fant (1975:47), for Bonhoeffer, there is thus no question of a mystical fusion between Christ and His church as the gathered congregation. In its visible form, the body of Christ is found in the congregation. His definition of the church in simple terms, was "Christ existing as community" (1975:45).

11.4.2.2 The presence of God in the pastoral structures of the church

So far, we have examined Bonhoeffer's view of the church, not only in relation to the divine mandate to preach the Word so that Christ may be present in the church, but also as the locus and sphere of the presence of Christ in the world. *Communio sanctorum*, for him, also signifies the dwelling place of God in the world.

A similar view of God's presence in the church is found in Firet's concept of the intermediary pastoral role-fulfilment that constitutes the ecclesial locus of God's coming to His people in His Word. Firet (1986:40ff) suggests the following three ecclesial structures of God's coming in His Word and the lines along which this occurs: *kerygma* (preaching), *didache* (teaching), and *paraklesis* (pastoral care). These three ecclesial structures for pastoral role-fulfilment mediate the coming of God in His Word, and are aimed at change and at the maturity of the congregation's faith and salvation. In this pastoral role-fulfilment, as exercised in the ecclesial ministry that serves the realization of salvation, it is God coming to His people in His Word who holds the initiative for salvation (1986:212); "At the heart of pastoral role-fulfillment is not the activity of a human being, but the action of God who, by way of the official ministry as intermediary, comes to people in His Word" (1986:15).

With regard to our discussion of the church as the ecclesial sphere of the divine presence, Firet also emphatically reminds us that pastoral role-fulfilment should adopt the gathered community as the basic form. Without the gathered community, pastoral role-fulfilment cannot prepare the ecclesial locus for God's coming and presence among His people. Thus, "The act of assembling together as a church is the basic form in which the body of Christ functions" (Firet 1986:85). By participating in the life of the assembled church, one can enjoy the intermediary coming and presence of God among His people. In this ecclesial structure:

The Word occurs in the magnetic field of a church gathered with Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. In an atmosphere of *mutuum colloquium* God comes in the modes of *kerygma*, *didache*, and *paraklesis*: in the assembly which is assembly in Christ and in the Spirit the actuality of salvation is proclaimed, the way on which one can walk 'in newness of life' is pointed out (Rom. 6:4; cf. Gal.

5:25), and the life of every member, in his or her contingent situation, is related to the center of the life of the entire called-out people of God – the salvation which has appeared in Christ (Fiebert 1986:86).

A similar emphasis on the church as the locus for the coming and presence of God among His people is found in Louw's view of the ecclesial structure, as the praxis of God. According to Louw (1999:91), 'praxis,' which goes beyond mere practice and involves the ongoing integration of action and reflection, refers to a critically reflected intentional action that is aimed at transforming the holistic reality of humanity. In this vein, the ministry of the church exercises and acquires the praxis of God, understood as the "ecclesial structure of God-human interaction and the meaning of the Christian faith for human action in the world":

Pastoral events create an encounter in which a mutual God-human relationship takes place. People are brought into the presence of God where they experience an encounter with Him. This encounter implies a partnership and togetherness in which a dialogue can take place. Thus, to enter into the presence of God is to be placed immediately within a context of togetherness where dialogue, influence and transformation can occur (Louw 1999:66).

When we understand the ecclesial and pastoral structures of the church in relation to the God-human encounter and the presence of God in the world, we can confirm that preaching, as one of three ecclesial structures of the pastoral role-fulfilment, is an operative locus in which the gathered congregation, as a *communio sanctorum*, participates in communion with God through His Word, and, with the guidance and work of the Spirit, is revealed as the body and presence of God Himself in the world.

11.4.2.3 The presence of God in the liturgical structures of the church

The presence of God both *in* and *as* the church, especially through the church's ecclesial and pastoral structures, can also be examined in relation to the liturgical structure, since the liturgy also constitutes an important axis for the presence of God. However, in spite of this obvious relationship of preaching to liturgy:

In both the Protestant and the Roman Catholic traditions of worship, the integral relationship between preaching and liturgy has not been very well maintained. Older Roman Catholics will still remember the days when it was not uncommon for the priest to remove his chasuble before proceeding to the pulpit for the Sunday sermon, thereby giving quite clear visible expression to the understanding that the sermon was an interruption of the mass. In the Protestant tradition – and here too I generalize and exaggerate – the situation was just the opposite. It was the sermon that was the central and all-

important feature of the service of worship. All else was 'setting' designed to show off the gem that the preacher had polished and perfected during the preceding week (Skudlarek 1981:65).

However, the division between preaching and liturgy has unfortunate consequences, not only for the liturgy, but for preaching as well. According to Von Allmen (cited in Skudlarek 1981:66-67):

If we disqualify preaching in favor of the sacrament we also compromise the sacrament, since it then becomes a mechanical piece of magic, a human attempt to seize grace and become master of it. If we disqualify the sacrament in favor of the sermon, we also compromise the sermon, because then it loses the reference which is necessary for its message, the outward commemoration of what it is announcing to us, and becomes the mere expression of an idea, with no power to grip us.

In the Protestant camp, we need to emphasize the liturgical foundation of preaching. In this regard, Fred Craddock (1978:47) rightly writes, "The most, if not only, appropriate posture for the speaker is that of worship." Viewing worship as the essential context for preaching, he asserts, "The liturgical setting is vital for the health of preaching," since "preaching is not simply in a setting of worship but is itself an act of worship" (Craddock 1985:42-43). With this in mind, he further suggests Scripture reading and prayer in preaching as examples that indicate the liturgical characteristics of preaching.

This inseparable bond between preaching and sacrament indicates that the weekly service, in which Christians gather to remember and celebrate the victory of Christ over death, is where preaching and sacrament will be two essential components of their act of worship (Skudlarek 1981:69). With this in mind, Skudlarek tries to unify preaching and liturgy in terms of the Eucharist that remembers and celebrates the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (1981:77ff). In our study, however, as the figures below indicate, we can unify preaching and worship in terms of God's presence; preaching as the articulation of His presence; and worship as the celebration of His presence. Müller suggests articulation and celebration as an appropriate frame to unify verbal and visual aspects of both preaching and liturgy. According to him, God's story, as witnessed in the Bible, is communicated in the following two modes: articulation and celebration of the story (Müller 1992:81-82; *cf.* Jung 1995:54,162,165ff).¹⁵

In one way, the story was communicated in a symbolic way through the cultic, priestly activities, i.e. all kinds of offerings, feasts, and ceremonies. Behind these cultic activities, there was the story to be

¹⁵ Henry Mitchell (*cf.* 1977:62ff, 1990:61ff) also develops articulation and celebration of preaching. However, his motivation for understanding preaching in terms of celebration arises mainly from his view of the audience as having an emotional dimension.

communicated. Thus, at the core of these cultic activities was the celebration of the story. At the same time, the story was communicated through verbal activities of the prophets, the priests, the wisemen, and the fathers. In one way or the other, therefore, these verbal activities were the articulation of the story (Jung 1995:54).

When we apply the unification of verbal articulation and visual and symbolic celebration of God’s story to our subject of the preaching of the divine presence, we can draw the following figure that shows the unification of the articulation and celebration, both in worship and in preaching, in view of the divine presence.

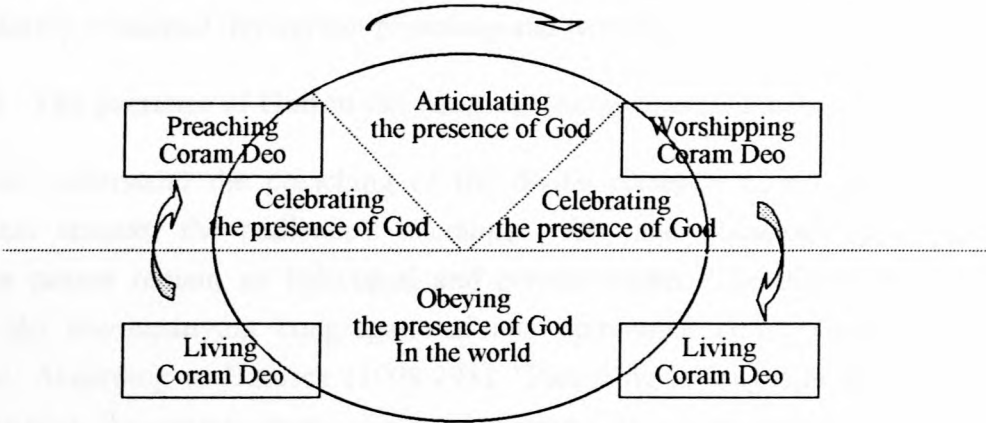


FIG. 14 A DIVINE PRESENCE BOTH IN PREACHING AND WORSHIP

If done correctly, preaching is the verbal articulation of the divine presence. “Preaching remembers Jesus Christ crucified in the midst of a being-saved community; thus preaching is the articulation of Christian faith-consciousness” (Buttrick 1998:249). In naming God, preaching articulates what the presence of God among His people means to us, and how this divine presence can be understood in relation to our life-in-faith. As Long (1993:187) puts it, preachers enter into the middle of the conversation between church-talk and secular language, knowing that people are out there in the pews (and in the world) already wondering about God and talking about Him. With the double consciousness of being-saved-in-the-world in mind, the audience, as the people of God, want preaching to address God’s mysterious absence in relation to their hope and expectation of the divine presence (cf. Loughlin 1996:143-144). In a sense, this articulation is the audience’s; it did not fall on the pews from the preacher’s lips, but was already there in the audience’s hearts in an inchoate form. Thus, “When the pastor stands among them to preach, the parishioners may eagerly say, ‘Preach for us; we do not know how to speak as we ought,’ and when the pastor does so, the people say in their hearts, ‘Yes, that is it; that is our message; that is our faith’” (Craddock 1985:44).

This articulation does not end in itself; it is motivated by, and proceeds with, the celebration of the divine presence throughout the worship. “At their rituals the people of God not only remember the story of God, but they also celebrate it as God’s redeemed people. As Wind and Lewis point out (1991:17), ‘in the gathered community’s liturgical retelling of God’ mighty acts, the past is re-presented, and the saving presence of God is encountered” (Jung 1995:165). Thus, “The grammar of Christian faith and its cultural expressions come to expression most centrally within the context of worship, as the biblical witness is read, sung, and proclaimed, and as that story is ‘experienced anew’ through the sacraments” (Eslinger 1995:20). In this sense, both the articulation and celebration of the divine presence are harmoniously combined throughout preaching and worship.

11.4.2.4 The presence of God in the congregational consciousness

When we understand the preaching of the divine presence in a broader liturgical and communal context, the audience’s encounter with, and consciousness of, this divine presence cannot remain an individual and private matter. The divine presence Himself creates the accompanying congregational and communal consciousness of the divine presence. According to Buttrick (1998:295), “Preaching is language aimed at communal consciousness, the consciousness of a congregation.” This does not encourage preaching to turn away from concrete existential persons toward an abstract docetic being. It rather embraces the communal language of preaching and the communal consciousness, shaped in the communal use of sermon language. Thus, while it may be helpful to keep in mind specific people in particular situations during the preparation of sermons, the language of preaching as a verbal reflection of the current socio-cultural infrastructure is actually also shaped by a common consciousness, a common way of understanding the world (Buttrick 1998:296).

Given the communal consciousness, shaped by the communal use of sermon language, the audience’s encounter with God must rather be understood as a communal encounter with, and communal consciousness of God. In this sense, the congregation’s understanding of, and encounter with God is not a private appropriation of the God-human encounter. It rather is a communal acquisition of God that takes place in a specific ecclesial context (*cf.* 9.3.1.3). Like baptism and the Eucharist, the God-human encounter acquires its appropriate meaning in the broader context of communion with others. This is one of the reasons why we must view the audience’s acceptance of the divine presence also in a broader socio-political context.

11.4.3 The socio-political sphere of the divine presence

In the previous section, we concluded that the audience should be appreciated, not only as an ecclesial entity, but also as belonging to the socio-political reality of the world – as being saved by the grace of God, but still remaining in the world (*cf.* 11.3.3). In short, the secular dimension of the audience can be defined in terms of being-saved-in-the-world. The next related question would then be: How must the world be involved in the act of preaching the divine presence? This question does not presuppose that the world is capable of listening directly to God's voice. It rather means that the audience, who has witnessed the presence of God, should stand in an extended line with the world, so that the world may also experience the presence of God, as the One who rules over all nations (*cf.*, Ps 47:8; 67:4; 96:8ff, etc.).

Thus, in our study, how the world becomes involved in the reception axis of the divine presence will be examined mainly in terms of the socio-political responsibility of the church. In this regard, Hauerwas's (1989:83) suggestion is helpful. According to him, the most creative social strategy that Christians have to offer is the church, as the visible and tangible sign of God's presence: "Here we show the world a manner of life the world can never achieve through social coercion or governmental action. We serve the world by showing it something that it is not, namely, a place where God is forming a family out of strangers." For him, "the biggest problem facing Christian theology is not translation but enactment" of the Gospel to the world (1989:171).

If we admit the necessity of an alternative community that reflects God's presence to the world, then the next question would be: How do we construct this alternative community in the world? How can we construct a signpost that indicates God's presence on earth? An answer is suggested by postliberal theologians who insist upon the importance of constructing a cultural-linguistic infrastructure upon which an alternative Christian community can be built in the world. One of them, Newbigin (1989:228), states: "All human thinking takes place within a 'plausible structure', which determines what beliefs are reasonable and what are not. The reigning plausibility structure can only be effectively challenged by people who are fully integrated inhabitants of another." With this in mind, he insists upon another plausible alternative structure to be constructed contra to the secular one: "I must repeat again that it is only as we are truly 'indwelling' the gospel story, only as we are so deeply involved in the life of the community which is shaped by this story that it becomes our real 'plausible structure,' that we are able steadily and confidently to live in this attitude of eager hope" (1989:232).

A similar view of the importance of constructing a plausible alternative structure in the world is found in Brueggemann's (1993:27) insistence of the evangelical infrastructure's

socio-political influence:

I use the term "infrastructure" to refer to the system or network of signs and gestures that make social relationship possible, significant, and effective. The social infrastructure is the almost invisible system of connections that gives life functioning power and provides connections and support systems. I take it that the most elemental human infrastructure is a network of stories, sacraments, and signs that give a certain nuance, shape, and possibility to human interaction. An evangelical infrastructure is one that mediates and operates in ways that heal, redeem, and transform ... if this evangelical infrastructure is not carefully constructed, the Christian congregation will rely on the dominant infrastructure of consumerism, and will not even discern until very late (too late) that the infrastructure of consumerism contains little good news.

With this in mind, Brueggemann (1993:28) suggests three components for an evangelical infrastructure that are ordered into past/present/future, and span life *created* by and *consummated* by God. Within this diachronic axis of the evangelical infrastructure, three origins of self, the world, and community are reframed in such a way as to offer a new understanding and possibility of life (1993:30ff). In accordance with Brueggemann's suggestion, we must pay attention to the importance of constructing an alternative frame of reference through which the alternative Christian community can be nurtured so as to reflect God's presence to the world. "It is only in this way that the public life of the world, its accepted habits and assumptions, can be challenged by the gospel and brought under the searching light of the truth as it has been revealed in Jesus" (Newbigin 1989:230).

When we view the socio-political dimension and sphere of the divine presence, we must still keep in mind the eschatological tension in which the divine presence is in the world. Although the construction of a cultural-linguistic infrastructure is crucial for preaching the divine presence to the world, the final realization of this divine presence surely is beyond human capacity; it depends totally upon God's initiative (*cf.* 10.3.3.2; fig. 9).

In the light of our definition of the audience so far, the next related question concerns the practical, rhetorical strategy that is relevant not only to the audience as we have defined it, but also to our subject of preaching the divine presence. The next section will deal with this.

11.5 Communicative strategy for preaching the Divine presence

When we try to formulate any communicative strategy in accordance with our definition of the audience, we realize immediately that this communicative strategy should be dealt with in the light of the following three concerns: God-images that are actually used in preaching; a linguistic mode in which the preacher decodes and delivers God-images in an accordant

way to the audience; and a communicative frame that not only encompasses, but also supports, the whole communicative act of preaching the divine presence. These three concerns, which must be examined in order to construct an appropriate communicative strategy, can be represented by the following figure.

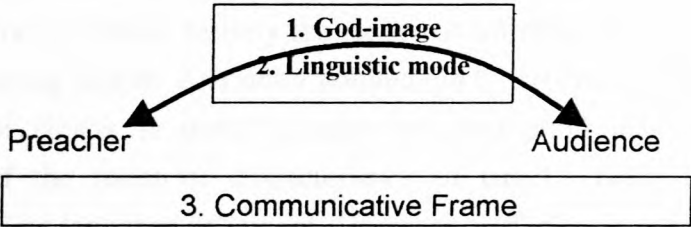


FIG. 15 THREE COMPONENTS OF THE COMMUNICATIVE STRATEGY

11.5.1 God-images appropriate for preaching the divine presence

In order to construct an appropriate communicative strategy, we must first formulate, if possible, norms for the usage of God-images that are suitable for preaching the divine presence. Regarding this matter, we may find some general appropriate images of God, for example: God as Father, soul Friend, Saviour, Comforter, Judge, etc. (cf. Louw 1999: 343). However, we need to remember that God-images have different meanings under different circumstances. Although we may suggest a certain God-image as appropriate for a specific circumstance, its practical effect is normally beyond anticipation.

For this reason, in our effort to establish God-images that are suitable for preaching the divine presence, the more important constant is not so much certain dogmatic and cognitive directives, but rather some central theological issues that are relevant when using God-images (cf. 8.3). According to Louw (1999:344), these central theological issues that underlie God-images may play a decisive role in the development of faith. With this in mind, Louw suggests the following five central theological issues: creation, suffering, victory, paradox, and the issue of imparting meaning. These central theological issues, which are implied in certain God-images, allow people to interpret their present existence in a new way: “Their present circumstances do not portray the whole picture, but form part of a much greater picture, which is held together in the eschatological framework of God’s faithfulness and grace. This knowledge inspires hope and brings meaning” (1999:345).

With this in mind, in this section, as an exemplary case, we shall deal with a God-image that portrays God as One who is present in human suffering. As we shall see, this image of God encapsules almost all the central theological issues, such as suffering, victory, paradox, and the issue of imparting meaning. Thus, by means of examining this paradoxical and

mysterious image of the God who is present in human suffering, we shall suggest a general homiletical way to deal with God-images, involving central theological issues.

11.5.1.1 The function of preaching to help the audience face the actuality of suffering

Suffering is a complex, inscrutable, and multi-faceted issue. It is totally impossible to explain rationally, or to remove entirely the reality of suffering; it remains an insoluble but inevitable part of being human. As rightly pointed out by DJ Hall (1986:32), "Biblical faith does not flinch or cloak in pretty phrases its assumption that being human means suffering." One of the foremost characteristics of Israel's faith, in particular, is the forthright nature of its language of lament. However, suffering is not so much about pain, afflictions and tragic events, as about the quality of the human reaction to it. In other words, although trauma brings suffering, the reality of suffering is relative to our ability to react appropriately to it. As rightly pointed out by Louw (2000:17), "Suffering sets in where our human power to manage and to understand is limited. The crisis of suffering surfaces where our coping mechanisms fail and meaninglessness sets in." Especially for Christians, suffering sets in when they fail to cope with it positively, because of an inappropriate frame of reference to interpret and understand the phenomenon of suffering. When suffering befalls a Christian, it does not help much to raise theological questions about the divine presence: Why did it happen to me, a child of God? Where is God in my pain? Does He really know what happened to me? What am I to God? In this moment of identity crisis and disorientation, people try to cope by reconstructing their faith in God compatible to the reality of suffering. Otherwise, they might flinch to face the actuality of suffering. Hall (1986:43ff) identifies the following three types of consequences of the incapacity to face suffering: inability to accept your own personal suffering with responsibility; indifference to others' suffering; and a search for a legitimate scapegoat to solve the burden of suffering vicariously. For this reason, we could state that, for Christians who face suffering, the real issue is not so much the suffering itself as their Christian reaction to it. This confirmation brings us to the next question. For a Christian, what is the most appropriate way to react to suffering?

According to Hall (1986:20), a common false reaction to suffering may be found within the two extreme poles of cynicism and credulity, to which Brueggemann (1989:45-46), in a similar vein, refers to when he talks about extreme reductionism (the uncritical form of objectivism emphasizing an alienated God beyond human question) and the practice of subjective consciousness - clinging to a resolution of a private problem (3.4.3.2). Cynicism resolves the burden of suffering by resignedly affirming only the reality of suffering without any Christian hope of overcoming it. For a Christian, this is a lie, as pain cannot

erase the reality of resurrection and shared laughter. The other extreme false resolution of suffering is credulity, even similar to an exercise of faith. It resolves the burden of suffering by accepting only the positive side: suffering has been overcome by the grace of God. According to Hall (1986:27), a great temptation amongst preachers, as they try to articulate God's presence in the life of the congregation, will be the sin of reductionism, i.e. to minimize, or even trivialize, the actuality of human suffering, and so end with religious superficial answers that are premature and shallow. But, for Christians, this is also a lie, as the "already" of God's kingdom should still be in harmony with the "not yet."

For this reason, as rightly pointed out by Hall (1986:21) and Brueggemann (1989:44), it is important for Christians to be realistic about the actuality of human suffering, and also to affirm the ultimate victory over it.

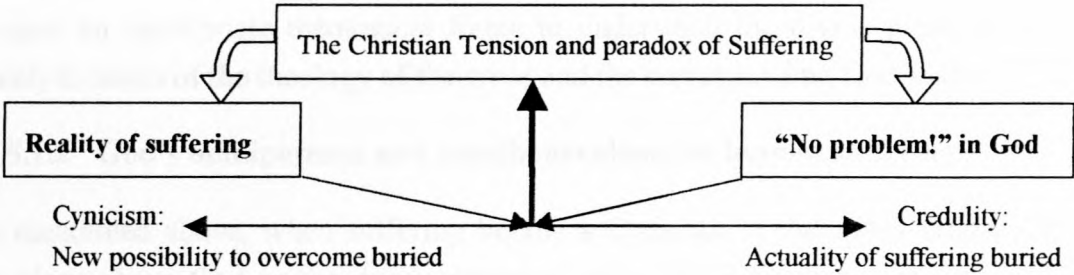


FIG. 16 TWO EXTREME REACTIONS TO SUFFERING

As the above figure depicts, unlike either cynicism or credulity, faith does not seek to resolve entirely the burden of suffering, but rather seeks the courage to live within the tension of suffering, avoiding the two extreme poles of cynicism and credulity.

Thus, we can accept that the most appropriate reaction to suffering should start with admitting the eschatological tension between the reality of suffering and a new possibility in God. 'Coming out of suffering' is only possible from the point of 'entering into suffering' (cf. 9.3.2). Once sincerely accepting the actuality of suffering, a new possibility to overcome it can begin for those Christians who face suffering.

In the light of this new possibility provided by God, suffering has a positive function for Christians. It can generate patience and endurance. It can release one from being overly self-focused, and make one aware of the needs of others. As rightly pointed out by Louw (2000:11ff), suffering can also develop maturity and a sense of meaning that enables one to transcend boundaries set by one's present circumstances.

Suffering can therefore lead to a new orientation, which embraces a new sense of purpose and a change in attitude. In other words, suffering can be seen as a process of growth and of finding meaning. In addition to the crisis that it brings, suffering can also be an opportunity for meaningful service to God and one's fellow human beings.

For this reason, preachers should hold forth an image of God that may help the congregation to establish an appropriate epistemological frame to recognize the constructive meaning and purpose of suffering. Within this frame of reference, the congregation can sincerely encounter suffering, find God's new possibility even in suffering, and overcome it in a reconstructed meaning. The congregation should also acquire an appropriate hermeneutical frame of how to find, and rightly respond to, the footsteps of God even in suffering. Then, our next necessary question will be: What kind of theological frame regarding suffering will be helpful to those who must cope with suffering? We shall suggest an appropriate theological frame to understand the divine presence in suffering, mainly in terms of the theology of the cross and the corresponding God-image.

11.5.1.2 God's omnipotence and omnibenevolence in human suffering

As mentioned above, when suffering befalls a Christian, it inevitably arouses theological questions about God or the divine presence: Why did it happen to me, a child of God? Where is God in my pain? In other words, Christians, who struggle to find the meaning of suffering, are inevitably involved in a crisis regarding their belief in God. This is where theodicy is concerned with a Christian attempt to reconcile belief in God's goodness and omnipotence with the fact of evil and suffering in the world. Thus, Van der Ven & Vossen (1995:17) take the doctrine of God as their point of departure, in which two aspects are of essential importance in drawing a constructive perspective about suffering: God's omnipotence and His love (omnibenevolence). Precisely these two attributes of God create a sort of dilemma concerning the relation between suffering and the Christian faith, for which theodicy models seek a solution.

The problem in this dilemma is that theology often presupposes a schism between God's omnipotence and His imminent love. These have often been viewed as two different opposing attributes. In order to systematize the different traditions and viewpoints about theodicy, Louw (2000:28-39) generally distinguishes between an inclusive and an exclusive approach. An inclusive approach regards suffering as the will of God, in order to safeguard His omnipotence prior to His goodness, mainly with regard to the following three aspects: suffering as God's punishment; as a process or means of attaining some higher goal in eschatological consummation; and as a temporal flaw of creaturehood that can be complete only in Christ. As one of the most representative of this inclusive approach, the retaliation

model is concerned with the view that God sends suffering as a punishment for sin. For the believer, suffering can serve as a means of discipline in order to attain sanctification. Everything, even sin and suffering, must be viewed as allowed by God in order to serve to glorify Him, His justice and holiness. However, although it has merit, this inclusive approach tends to foster not only God's omnipotence rather than His love, but also His transcendence while ignoring His imminent love.

The exclusive approach reacts to a static model that portrays God in an unsympathetic manner. This approach stresses God's *pathos* as an indication of His compassion and even of His protest against all forms of evil and suffering. Thus, God's identification with suffering indicates that He does not necessarily cause suffering. Louw (2000:33-38) categorizes the following three opinions into this exclusive approach: the theopaschitic model of a suffering God; ethical action as a means to combat socio-political suffering; and the temporal struggle of God and humans toward the eschatological consummation. According to the theopaschitic model, God does not will evil as such, but He, Himself, even suffers in some way with, or under, evil in order to display His compassion. Most of all, the cross of Christ becomes the proof that God is not unyielding and sadistic, but is deeply affected by evil.

Although this exclusive approach also has limitations when trying to explain the mystery of suffering at a rational level, from this exclusive approach, which mainly emphasizes the aspects of God's involvement and identification with human suffering rather than God's transcendency, we can draw some relevant implications for the subject of the divine presence in suffering. The theology of the cross offers a profound insight into this matter.

11.5.1.3 The theology of the cross and the divine presence in suffering

In theology, the topic of a theology of the cross is not new. From Tertullian and Irenaeus, through to M Luther, K Barth, Bonhoeffer, Jüngel, J Moltmann, Sölle, and others, this has been discussed as an important theological subject. In this section, we deal only with the practical significance of the theology of the cross, so as to consider the constructive meaning of human suffering in relation to God's identification and involvement with human suffering.

First of all, the theology of the cross offers a bridge between God's love and the actuality of human suffering, since Christ's death means divine involvement in human suffering. In a theology of the cross, we can find the contact point of God's identification with human suffering - divine suffering for human suffering. The cross is an act of God and a revelation of His wrath caused by human sin, as well as a demonstration of His love, presence, *pathos*

and solidarity with human suffering. For this reason, any God-image that is used in relation to God's presence in human suffering should be based upon Christology that reveals His involvement and identification with human suffering.

Secondly, a theology of the cross that incorporates both Christ's reconciliatory work and God's mercy and grace, provides us with hope, which contains the meaning and new possibility of suffering. Although the cross reveals God's judgment of a sinner, it also provides an answer to people's existential questions and their struggle with life's anxiety, despair, and absurdity. Regarding suffering, this hope proposes not an explanation or absolute resolution, but an eschatological promise of God's final triumph over all evil and suffering. Thereby, it also provides an initiative for Christian dynamics in overcoming suffering and combating injustice. In this vein, preaching to a sufferer should produce hope derived from the cross of Christ who has overcome death, and has opened the way to overcome suffering. From this eschatological hope, built upon the resurrection, a suffering congregation can find the possibility to overcome suffering.

Thirdly, a theology of the cross also offers the best appropriate answer to human suffering, i.e. the divine presence itself. In his book, *God, pain, and evil*, George Buttrick (1966:8ff) insists that an appropriate answer for suffering, as a kind of existential event, should be acquired from another, divine event set over against it. In the same vein, Hall (1986:183) insists:

Answers to human suffering – as we learn from Job's comforters – are always inadequate, no matter how 'right' they may be in their way. Interestingly enough, some of the same things that the God of Job says out of the whirlwind have already been iterated by the comforters, especially Elihu! But that does not make the 'answer' of the comforters appropriate after all; because it is not what God says finally to the suffering Job but that God says something that is the answer. The Presence itself is the answer, and the only appropriate and convincing one, for all its elusiveness.

Thus, the only satisfactory response to human suffering seems to come from the source of life. Because the word-event, of which Jesus is the core, does not bypass – nor does it easily resolve – the 'fact' of our suffering but goes to the heart of it, accepting its reality, being broken by it, yet unobtrusively engaging it with a love that is stronger than death – because of this participation and encounter with suffering humanity at the centre of the *kerygma*, faith can experience it as an event meeting our vulnerable existence face to face. For this reason, the preaching of the divine presence through a certain God-image should seek to portray God's character and identity in such a way as to lead the congregation into a personal encounter with Him. Although this encounter cannot directly answer the inscrutable question of the actuality of suffering, through this encounter, the sufferer can

find a new way to overcome it in the light of the divine involvement and identification with His suffering.

Fourthly, because an appropriate answer for human suffering can best be acquired from God's vulnerable presence in human suffering, we must reframe our conventional image of God: the divine power in His vulnerability in human suffering, rather than divine triumphalism. Thus, as rightly pointed out by Louw (2000:113), an important role of the theology of the cross is to reframe our understanding of God, His power in His vulnerability and woundedness. In fact, many sensitive Christians have already sensed the inappropriateness of the power motif in an age so gravely threatened by a surfeit of power, and the church also recognizes that it no longer is the powerful institution that it once was. In other words, a new seriousness about the meaning of the Word that is central to our confession, Christ's sacrificial suffering and death replaces the need to think triumphalistically. According to Hall (1986:105), the theology of the cross does not intend simply to discard the metaphor of power, but it wants to transform it; for it is an adequate way of speaking about God's redemptive work only if it conforms to His image revealed in the crucified One. For this reason, preaching the divine presence through an image of God, who is present in suffering, should reconstruct stereotyped images of God so as to help the congregation to find new hope in the presence of God, even if He is perceived to be absent.

Fifthly, the theology of the cross discloses Christ's continual suffering for the world, and invites the church to participate in His present suffering for the world. As pointed out by Hall (1986:137), everything written in the New Testament about the suffering of the church (Rom 8:17; Phil 1:29; 1 Pe 4:13) reminds us that the earliest Christians regarded their suffering as a mode and sign of their participation in Christ's suffering, i.e. *imitatio Christi*. Not only did they bear witness to a Messiah who participated fully in the human condition, but they regarded their own being as *soma Christou*, as an ongoing participation in Christ's participatory life, i.e. as a people being conformed to the crucified Lord (*conformitas Christi*). Their 'witness', therefore, implied their own profound involvement with the pain of the world, even to the point of martyrdom. For this reason, preaching of the divine presence through images of God who is present in suffering should formulate the message in such a way as to help the congregation to find the footsteps of God who engages with the pain of the world, and lead them to join His redemptive involvement with it – a pain which includes, not only the suffering of human beings, but the groaning and travail of the whole of creation (Rom 8:22).

So far, we have taken a closer look at the image of God who is deeply involved in human suffering, and the theology of the cross that involves central theological issues. By

examining this image of God, we strove to underline the fact that the usage of God-images in preaching should always involve central theological issues. If the preacher has a certain God-image in mind, then, the following question becomes important, especially in relation to the communicative strategy used when preaching the divine presence: Within what communicative frame can we use a certain image of God in such a way as to bring the audience into the presence of God? The next section will now deal with this question.

11.5.2 A communicative frame appropriate for preaching the divine presence

In a previous section (*cf.* 10.4.1 and fig. 9), where we examined the role of the preacher, we emphasized that he/she should have a close consciousness of the God who is present in the act of preaching. In addition, while defining the audience’s communicative relationship with the preacher, we also confirmed that this communicative relationship involves the God who is present in preaching as the first Speaker and Audience (*cf.* 11.2.3; esp. fig 12). The question now is: What is the operative communicative frame that honours the authority and reality of the God who is present in preaching?

P Babin’s (1991:100ff) view of communication that is modeled according to the poor in spirit, offers an interesting answer to the question posed above. According to him, this communication is “detachment from material goods, a love of truth and justice, and a mixture of weakness, confident strength, gentleness, and humility in human relationship” On the contrary, “the rich are characterized by sufficiency, insensitivity of heart, and attachment to material goods and to the laws governing their possession” (1991:100). With this in mind, he suggests a Christian communication model of the poor in spirit as the following figure depicts:

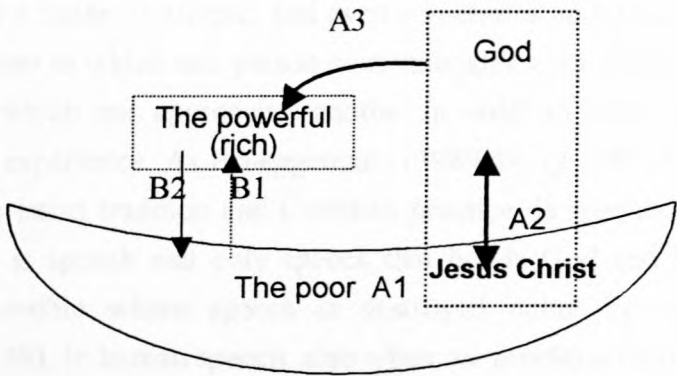


FIG. 17 P BABIN’S COMMUNICATION MODEL OF THE POOR IN SPIRIT

“In this scheme, the poor are an open circle touching God (A1-A2). The poor modulate toward the rich (B1). Most certainly, they pass through God (A3). The powerful (the rich)

are in control and make their domination felt (B2) (see Matt. 20:25)” (P Babin 1991:101). For Babin, the terms used in this communication scheme – God, the poor, and the rich – do not apply primarily to persons or sociological entities. From his communicative scheme, we can identify what the distinction of the Christian communication is or should be, i.e. Christian communicators who are poor in spirit. Thus, as Babin remarks, this communicator, who is aware of his/her poverty before God, within an open circle touching God (A1-A2), may pass through God (A3) to the powerful rich in such a way as to modulate the message of the gospel to the rich (B1). On the contrary, the rich who “are characterized by sufficiency, insensitivity of heart, and attachment to material goods and to the laws governing their possession” may be in control and make their domination felt over others (B2).

Here, the most important key is the Christian communicators’ consciousness of radical poverty before the God. “The condition of radical poverty provides the best path to the communication revealed by the gospel” (Babin 1991:103). A similar communicative frame that presupposes Christian communicators’ humble consciousness of radical poverty before God can be also found in St Paul’s distinct communicative mode, as examined in 10.4.4.

In conclusion, an appropriate communicative frame for preaching the divine presence can be constituted through the model of the poor in spirit, in which “a mixture of weakness, confident strength, gentleness, and humility in human relationship” (Babin 1991:100) works together in such a way that the audience might be drawn into God’s presence – a God who is strong, yet humble enough to die on the cross. The next question concerns the linguistic mode in which preachers decode and deliver a certain God-image to the audience.

11.5.3 Linguistic modes appropriate for preaching the divine presence

“Word” or “saying”, in a sense, is simple, and even sometimes ambiguous, but in another sense, it is a genuine form in which one person communicates with another. The word then spoken is the form in which one approaches another in order to enter the other person’s thoughts, feelings, and experience. As Brueggemann (1989:44; cf. 1997:53) rightly insists, most elementally in Christian tradition and Christian practice, is speech that is the central act of communion: “It is speech and only speech that bonds God and human creatures. Communion is not possible where speech is destroyed either by selfishness or by submissiveness” (1989:49). In human speech, also when we proclaim God’s name and pray for His presence, God comes to His people, and we praise His presence. The coming and present God cannot be secured automatically by mysterious natural phenomena, such as thunder, lightning, an earthquake, or emulation of astonishing visual presentations, such as fingers writing on the wall of Belshazzar’s palace (Dan 5:5). We live in the dispensation of

the final Word of God, Jesus Christ (*cf.* Heb. 1:1). This Word uses words to communicate. In this sense we could say: The divine presence is experienced in and through human speech.

When we seek an appropriate linguistic mode for preaching the divine presence, an appropriate point of departure can be acquired from our previous discussions of the cultural-linguistic view of sermon language (*cf.* 8.3.2.3). In that segment, we criticized both the cognitive-propositional and the experiential-expressive views of religious language, and concluded that the proclamation of the divine presence should be understood in the light of an ecclesial and linguistic enculturation process, in which Christians, after entering the Christian community assimilate the specific language and practices of that community - also those confessing the presence of God. In addition, we also suggested that Christian narrative might offer an appropriate normative, ecclesial, and hermeneutical scheme for preaching within this communal and linguistic enculturation process (*cf.* 8.4.1, 2).

In order to find a proper linguistic mode for preaching the divine presence, we also need to remember our definition of the audience, since any linguistic mode in a communicative strategy should reflect the identity and definition of the audience. In our study, we defined the audience as a theological, pneumatological, eschatological, hermeneutical, and communicative entity with three receptor dimensions of the Word (*cf.* 11.2). Based upon these definitions, we discussed the following three reception spheres: the individual inner heart and paradigmatic imagination; the ecclesial and pastoral sphere and pastoral role-fulfilment; and the socio-political responsibility of the church in the world (*cf.* 11.3, 4). By means of these definitions, we tried to suggest that preaching of the divine presence should honour the audience as theological, hermeneutical, and communicative entity in view of the individual, ecclesial, and socio-political reception of the Word.

The next question now has a more communicative strategy in mind, concerning the practical linguistic mode that could be implemented when preaching the divine presence. In this section, we shall examine several possible linguistic modes that could be constitutive of a communicative strategy for preaching the divine presence, grouped into four fields of language: confessional, evocative, interpretative, and imaginative, all of which are unseparable and interrelated.

11.5.3.1 Confessional language as a mode for preaching the divine presence

The first linguistic mode that merits closer attention, is the confessional mode. In preaching, preachers cannot but reflect their three consciousnesses: of God, the audience, and the self. As pointed out before (*cf.* 10.4), preachers' personal witness of God reflects their authentic encounter with God, whether shallow or profound. "No matter how the preacher tries, the

most obvious thing about him, to those who attend his sermons, will be his touch, or lack of touch, with God” (C Miller 1989:30). For Thielicke (1978:10ff), the language of faith should be confessional in that the impure, untrue language of contemporary preaching can be overcome by preachers’ personal conviction.

When we understand preachers’ proclamation of God in terms of their confessional utterance, this confessional dimension of witnessing also reveals its communal dimensions. According to Thor Hall (1971:86-88; cf. Long 1989:10), in theological discourse, speakers belong to religious communities that perceive the universe through some normative epistemological frame that they believe to be a true reflection and explanation of reality. In this vein, a preacher’s witness becomes legitimized and resonated within a specific Christian community that shares the same faith and practice.

The confessional language of witnessing also has an eschatological dimension, as our confession reflects, albeit imperfectly, the eschatological reality that God brings into being. Until the *eschaton*, our confessional naming of God is like a dim mirror (1 Cor 13:12) and our confession of God is only possible by faith and hope, not by sight (Heb 11:1; Rom 8:24-25). “Such believing is sustainable only within the community of faith, where we test our beliefs and practices by the biblical witness and trust that there is an ongoing Word from God” (Rose 1997:109).

11.5.3.2 Evocative language as a mode to preach the divine presence

The second linguistic mode that we consider, is the evocative mode of language. As is well known, language is not merely descriptive but, in a sense, is “evocative of reality and constitutive of reality” (Brueggemann 1993:12). Through evocatively picturing, portraying, imagining, reminding, and authorizing the divine reality, human speech in preaching becomes a constitutive element decisive for the divine presence. A homiletical legitimation of the evocative mode of the sermonic language can also be found in the preacher’s mediatory role. As concluded before, the preacher’s witness should be understood in terms of a verbal mediation of the divine presence (cf. 10.3.3.2). In preachers’ verbal and sacramental mediatory witness, their role is not to cause God to be present, but to verbally remind the audience of the God who is already present, so that they may become aware of this divine presence. One could paradoxically say: their speech constructs a reality that is already there.

As Buttrick (1987:183) aptly points out, the essential nature of language is “a naming in the human consciousness, a bringing out and into view of surrounding mysteries, and perhaps even of the mystery of a Presence-in-Absence God.” Thus, the congregational inner

consciousness and heart offer the evocative language an inner base as to verbally relate the audience's consciousness to the awareness of the divine presence (*cf.* 11.4.1).

When we accept the evocative mode of preaching, we must also accept the fact that the audience's awareness of God might be multivalent in such a way as to bring forth multiple meanings of the divine presence. Scott (1985:75) discusses language in general as possessing a surplus of meaning. Thus, in a practical situation where a God-image is implemented, its exact meaning does not easily converge into one image; it may rather bring forth multiple appropriations that seem relevant to an individual listener's context.

However, this individual appropriation does not necessarily mean that the multivalent contrivance of a God-image should legitimize vested interests of the individual. As explained in 8.4.2.1, the normative frame of Christian narratives that offers an epistemological infrastructure for preaching guides a preacher's efforts to proclaim the divine presence. Within this broad normative frame, God-images, which are evocatively witnessed, are guided in such a way as to express in the best way possible the biblical and ecclesial faith, in the context in which the preaching takes place.

11.5.3.3 Hermeneutical language as mode to preach the divine presence

The homiletical necessity for hermeneutical language can be seen in previous studies of the Christian narrative, and in the definition of an audience. To begin with, in a previous section (*cf.* 8.4.2.3) where we dealt with the homiletical function of the Christian narrative, we confirmed that the church's engagement with the Christian narrative accompanies the hermeneutical activity of seeking how to respond to God's world and His presence. As pointed out there, "to confess Christian faith is to engage in a hermeneutical activity" (Stroup 1981:200). Thus, when a Christian narrative is presented so as to bring the narrative of personal or ecclesial identity into God's meta-narrative, this engagement with Christian narrative also entails constructive hermeneutical activities. Therefore, we can deduce that the preacher's witness about God should be not so much a dogmatic and propositional statement about God, but rather the offering of an alternative hermeneutical infrastructure to guide the audience on how to view, and respond appropriately to, the divine presence in their lives.

Furthermore, our definition of the audience also underlines the homiletical necessity of a hermeneutical mode in witnessing about God. In a previous section, when we examined the audience in relation to the Bible, we defined the audience as a hermeneutical entity who seeks the ultimate meaning of life in the Bible. As concluded in 11.2.2, when the preacher is in the pulpit, the audience, as a 'telic being,' seeking the ultimate meaning of life before

God, wants some light to be shed on this quest (*cf.* Troeger 1990:90). Thus, the audience's quest for the meaning of life before God should be satisfied through the Christian narrative that offers an alternative hermeneutical frame to view Him, and the world, anew.

According to Brueggemann (1997:75), this alternative hermeneutical scheme, offered by Christian preaching, sets the audience apart in the world, as "they come to church knowing that they here enter a different discourse, in which we talk oddly about odd matters. When we come to church we are not only able, managing, achieving daytime operators. We are at the same time haunted, bewildered, frightened creatures of the night, ready for new configurations of reality and meaning, ready to be 're-webbed' in more risky ways, ready even in our resistance." Brueggemann suggests the term 'density' when referring to the odd aspect of Christian identity, discourse and practice.

Our density is not simply because we are *Homo sapiens*, but because we are baptized, committed, beloved, commanded persons with all the complexities that accompany passionate commitment and unconditional grace. We come unresolved. But we come. That means we have a certain staying power for this odd identity. We refuse to be consumers, or to be consumed by conformity or by isolated individualism. And so we attend to symbolic discourse, which mediates to us obligation, ragged ministry, the artistry of Bach, the flow of little children, the requirement of neighbor love (Brueggemann 1997:75-76).

To sum up: In preaching, the audience hears an odd witness of the divine presence based upon an alternative hermeneutical frame, and receives as gift an odd infrastructure, assisting them to view all realities in a different way, alien to the secular, even militant way of contemporary ideologies.

11.5.3.4 Imaginative language as mode for preaching the divine presence

When we try to find an appropriate language for preaching the divine presence, an important possibility that must be addressed is imaginative language. The homiletical necessity for imagination arises from the following three reasons: an individual listener's heart which functions imaginatively; the sermonic function of imagination that produces an alternative evangelical epistemological frame; and a prerequisite imagination for subsequent action and obedience.

The homiletical necessity for imagination has already been confirmed in terms of paradigmatic imagination, which Green suggests (*cf.* 11.4.1.2). Having in mind the ability of human beings to recognize in accessible examples the constitutive patterns of the less accessible and more complex reality of the divine presence, we suggested that paradigmatic

imagination offers an anthropological sphere and contact point between the Word of God and its human reception. Here, we dealt with the sermonic function of imagination mainly in relation to the individual human heart that receives the Word.

However, this sermonic function of the imagination does not necessarily imply privatization of the Gospel. The imaginative portrayal of the divine presence should rather be understood in the light of the church's normative, communal practice, because this imaginative witness is, or should be, under the control of the Bible's normative function and communal practices in the church. When an imaginative portrayal of the divine presence is based upon the Bible, the practise of imagination can be a way through which the preacher and the audience can re-image and reconstrue the reality of the divine presence according to the Bible's evangelical script. "Such preaching does not aim at immediate outcomes but over time intends, detail by detail, to make a different world available in which different acts, attitudes, and policies are seen to be appropriate" (Brueggemann 1997:33). When we understand an imaginative portrayal of the divine presence in relation to the communal practices of the church, this imaginative portrayal can, through these practices, overcome an individualistic privatization of God. (*cf.* Troeger in Van Seters [ed] 1988:217-218).

To sum up: The sermonic use of imagination produces an alternative evangelical epistemological frame against secular militant ideologies, and gives rise to a world of new possibilities that conquers secular ideologies. Agreeing with Ricoeur, Brueggemann (1997:59) suggests exactly this:

Imagination is the capacity to work through images, metaphors, and narratives as a way of evoking, generating, and constructing an alternative world that lies beyond and in tension with the taken-for-granted, commonsense world of day-to-day experience. In other words, imagination is the active enterprise of moving beyond one's defining commitments to entertain alternative definitions of self, world, other, and God.

In this vein, through the imaginative enterprise of moving beyond conventional ideologies, the preaching of the divine presence can effectively constitute an alternative infrastructure, a new lens through which one can view reality anew. Here this alternative infrastructure, constituted by the imaginative practice, is not just a cognitive frame through which we may view and understand reality, such as the world, self, or God. It rather is also an active springboard to motivate consequential action and obedience.

Thus the epistemological function of this imaginative practice that envisages what is to be acted out in advance also needs attention. According to Holmes (1976:40), "An action is conscious in the sense that, before we carry it out, we have a picture in our mind of what we

are going to do.” Momaday (cited in Riegert 1990:35) also points out the same dimension of human imagination: “We are what we imagine. Our very existence consists in our imagination of ourselves. Our best destiny is to imagine, at last, completely, who and what and that we are.” With this active function of the imagination in mind, Hauerwas (1989:84; *cf.* Mitchell 1990:80) insists, “We can only act within a world we can see. Vision is the necessary prerequisite for ethics.” Brueggemann (1989:85) also points out this dimension of imagination in obedience:

Paul Ricoeur has seen as well as anyone that obedience follows imagination. Our obedience will not venture far beyond or run risks beyond our imagined world. If we wish to have transformed obedience (i.e., more faithful, responsive listening), then we must be summoned to an alternative imagination, in order that we may imagine the world and ourselves differently. The link of obedience to imagination suggests that the toughness of ethics depends on poetic, artistic speech as the only speech that can evoke transformed listening. Even concerning ethics, “finally comes the poet.”

For this reason, preaching, which intends an appropriate reaction and obedience to the divine presence, must be concerned with a transformed imagination that motivates the audience to envisage their participation in, and celebration of, God’s transformative world, and leads them to ethical obedience (*cf.* Green 1989:101-102; Brueggemann 1989:85-88, 1997:33ff; Eslinger 1995:145ff).

11.6 The Korean audience: Challenges for preaching the Divine presence

In the light of what we have said so far about an appropriate normative foundation for the understanding of the role of the audience, the next step will be to make some strategic suggestions specifically for the Korean audience, as inherent homiletical factor in the preaching of the divine presence, and for a communicative strategy that is relevant to them.

11.6.1 The role of the Korean audience in the preaching of the divine presence

In order to make some strategic suggestions for the Korean audience, we first need to remember how the five preachers we analyzed view the audience and, secondly, examine some religious, cultural and communicative characteristics that may be found generally in the Korean audience. Based upon these two considerations, we shall make some strategic suggestions in regard to sermon delivery.

In the previous homiletical analysis of the five Korean sermons, we identified each preacher’s unique view of the audience (*cf.* 7.3). For example, Park views the audience as those who go on a pilgrimage toward the heavenly home, and thus need to follow the Word of God in order not to be lost, but to glorify God through their holy lives. In a similar sense,

Oak views the audience with a bilateral focus: God's chosen people called from the world, as well as Christ's disciples sent to the world. In contrast, Lee views the audience rather as a communicative entity whose communicative dimension must be considered in preaching. This communicative consideration of the audience is similarly found in Kwak's sermon in which he views the audience in the light of their socio-cultural locus. Lastly, Cho regards the audience in respect of the existential needs that they feel. In this sense, we could say that the audiences as reflected in this excerpt of Korean preaching can be considered in terms of their theological, pneumatological, eschatological, hermeneutical and communicative entity. For example, the emphasis in Park, Oak, and Kwak's view is mainly on the audience as a theological entity; Lee and Cho view the audience mainly as a communicative entity.

Having said that Korean preachers do pay sermonistic attention to the audience's being, then the next question would be about the religious, cultural, and communicative characteristics of the Korean audiences that preachers need to heed when preaching. Whereas sufficient knowledge of the audience is a prerequisite for the preparation and practice of effective preaching, it is not easy to describe a Korean audience in general. "This is because there are no homogeneous congregations, either in terms of the stage of faith development or in terms of age, gender, education, occupation, or personal experience. Moreover, individual local congregations have their own particular issues and problems due to the geographical location of the church, theological trends of the congregation, and the characteristics of the leadership of the church" (EJ Kim 1999:13). While acknowledging the particular character of each local congregation, we may point out the following three rather general characteristics of Korean audiences: a communal personality, affective preference in an epistemological frame, and a high spiritual expectation of sermons.

First, when compared to Western individualistic trends, the Korean audience opts to share a communal personality that is formed by the hierarchical order of Oriental religions, such as Confucianism and Shamanism. According to Augsburger (1986:83) who compares the Oriental communal identity to Western individual identity, the following is characteristic of the Oriental epistemological frame: "A person is known by his or her unit, not by an individual name. Where the West is oriented toward the individual, to satisfying a person's needs and catering to the tastes of each, the Chinese center of gravity is in the group or the family." In this communal solidarity that is interwoven by the Confucian hierarchical order and filial piety between children and parents and among the sibling fraternity, individual members of a Korean audience are not isolated units, but part of the whole to which he or she belongs, so diverse individual members of the congregation interact with one another at a group level. In this communal bond, it is natural for each member to have difficulty in going against a major trend. In a sense, the Korean audience with its communal personality

seems to be ultra sensitive about the general trend. This communal personality of a Korean audience represents both sides of a coin. On the positive side, it means that the preacher may easily utilize this communal personality to develop the congregation's communal consciousness and obedience to the divine presence. On the negative side, it also means that the preacher may have difficulty in renovating the conventional ideology that already is part of the congregation's communal personality. This is both an opportunity and a burden that Korean preachers have to overcome in the congregation.

The second characteristic of the Korean audience may be located in their affective preference in the epistemological frame. Generally speaking, the Korean sermon tends to be delivered in an active and dynamic mode in such a way as to attempt to arouse emotional and affective reaction. Some relate this aspect to the Shamanistic influence upon the Korean corporate mind-set (*cf.* Harvey Cox 1995:220ff; JY Lee 1997:53,61-62,74,90). According to this observation, Shamanistic ritual tends to arouse an affective reaction, and tries to release an emotional burden through exhilarating singing and dancing, or even a moving speech. In a similar vein, some moving sermons delivered in the Korean church tend to be easily forgotten outside the warm atmosphere of the church, and fail to exert any socio-political influence. These Korean sermons tend to address merely the individual and affective dimensions of the audience, and fail to pay due attention to other dimensions, such as the audience's conative and corporate dimensions.

Another characteristic of the Korean audience can be found in the high spiritual sensibility in worship and preaching. In 8.5.1, we have already examined the spiritual sensibility or expectation of the Korean audience in the light of the Korean indigenous religions' resilient influence. Here we must, however, remind ourselves of what we said in 8.5.1, namely that preaching of the divine presence should be done not with a view to some temporal and affective arousal, but also in relation to the constitution of a hermeneutical scheme to guide the audience in their obedience to God in the world. In other words, the sermonic consideration of the audience in Korean preaching needs to pay due attention to the conative and interpretative dimension, so that the sermon's affective dimension may be complemented by the hermeneutical scheme, and produce a consequential conative decision and socio-political application of the preached message in the world. In my opinion, this is of paramount importance for the future of Korean preaching.

11.6.2 A communicative strategy for Korean preaching

A final question would be: What is an appropriate communicative strategy for preaching the divine presence to the Korean audience? With the abovementioned three general characteristics of Korean audiences in mind, we now suggest the following three

communicative strategies: an egalitarian mode of sermon delivery rather than a hierarchical mode; an imaginary sermon development rather than a cognitive and dogmatic development; and an interpretative approach to the divine presence in real life, rather than an affective emphasis focused upon a temporal amusement.

The first communicative strategy has to do with an egalitarian speech mode versus the traditional hierarchical speech mode of preaching in Korea. According to JY Lee's (1997:90) observation, "many Korean preachers have a tendency to 'shout and yell' in a high-pitched tone." EJ Kim (1999:20) points out something similar about the delivery style in Korean preaching: "The typical preaching style is the authoritative three-point deductive approach with rigid, simplistic, and humorless prescriptive and imperative language." While such a hierarchical system has ruled the Korean pulpit, it should be noted that this general trend has recently been challenged by the new generation accustomed to an egalitarian, spontaneous, and reciprocal delivery mode. Sustaining the authoritative and unilateral delivery mode can cause a serious stumbling block in the preaching ministry. Rather, Korean preachers need to develop an egalitarian and reciprocal delivery mode in which contemporary audiences may spontaneously participate in the dialogic process of sermonic communication.

The second communicative strategy concerns the cognitive and dogmatic contents dominantly delivered in Korean sermons. As EJ Kim (1999:20) points out, the deductive three-point approach is the typical preaching style. However, preaching is more than a sermonic lecture about God. It rather has to involve the richness and full texture of the biblical narrative that reveals the presence of God in the world. This Christian narrative should also be presented in an imaginary and imaginative mode of communication. As stated in 11.5.3.4, the sermonic function of the imagination is to produce an alternative evangelical epistemological frame against secular militant ideologies, and to suggest a world full of new possibilities. In this sense, Korean preaching needs to promote imaginary and imaginative hermeneutical abilities, so that Korean audiences who are exposed to a culture that spreads militant consumerism and self-centred ideology, may construct an alternative world to the one that seeks to overwhelm them.

Thirdly, Korean preaching should stop being merely temporally affective and emotionally amusing and move towards developing an alternative hermeneutical infrastructure through which the audience may find God's footsteps anew in their lives (*cf.* JY Lee 1997:79; EJ Kim 1999:27). As mentioned before (*cf.* 11.4), God's presence is more than a temporal representation that may be experienced only in the worship and preaching context; it must rather involve holistic articulation, celebration, and practical appropriation in all aspects of

the worship, preaching, but also in all aspects of life in the world.

11.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, we discussed a normative foundation for the role of the audience in preaching, and made some strategic suggestions specifically about the audience that is involved in Korean preaching. We first defined the audience in relation to the other three components of preaching: God (a theological, pneumatological, and eschatological entity), the Bible (a hermeneutical entity), and the preacher (a communicative entity). In addition to these definitions, we also defined and examined the audience according to the reception axis of the Word: as an individual being (the human heart and paradigmatic imagination), an ecclesial and communal being (the divine presence through pastoral role-fulfilment), and as being engaged in the world (the socio-political responsibility of the church).

Through these discussions, we tried to indicate that the preaching of the divine presence should honour the audience as a theological, hermeneutical, and communicative entity with an individual, ecclesial, and socio-political dimension. After examining and defining the audience, we further discussed an appropriate communicative strategy for preaching the divine presence, a strategy that includes the use of the image of the God who is present in suffering, the communicative frame of the poor in spirit, and the following four linguistic dimensions of witness: confessional, evocative, hermeneutic, and imaginative.

In the light of all this, a communicative strategic suggestion was made in relation to the Korean audience. We first examined the following three general characteristics of the Korean audience: its communal personality, affective preference in the epistemological frame, and high spiritual sensibility and expectation. Based upon these observations, we additionally suggested the following three communicative strategies: an egalitarian mode of sermon delivery, rather than a hierarchical mode; imaginary sermon development rather than a cognitive and dogmatic development; and an interpretative approach to the divine presence in real life, rather than an affective emphasis focused upon temporal amusement.

Summary and Conclusion

1 General summary

The main aim of this study was to acquire an appropriate homiletical understanding of the preaching of the divine presence in Korea. As the title indicates, this study involves the fields of practical description and explanation of the preaching of the divine presence in Korea, as well as normative and strategic suggestions for this homiletical theme, in accordance with Dingemann's view on a practical theological methodology.

In chapter 1, as prelude to describing the practical reality of preaching in Korea, we constructed an appropriate analytical frame that consists of the following three components: the religio-sociological background of the Korean corporate personality, five representative Korean sermons, and an analytical tool that could guide us in our analyses of the five sermons. We first examined four indigenous Korean religions (Shamanism, Taoism, Buddhism and Neo-Confucianism), and found the following four general characteristics of the Korean religious heritage: a Shamanistic tendency, syncretism with other religions, otherworldliness with a pessimistic worldview, and exclusive and rigid conservatism. In addition to these religious characteristics, we also discussed the *Han* spirit as a Korean collective consciousness that is about a collective suffering experience.

We then described a comprehensive homiletical model for analysis that coincides with the following four components of preaching: God, the preacher, the Bible, and the audience (congregation). Based upon these four components of preaching, we referred to Bohren's model for sermon analysis and elaborated on the following six analytical questions: What is the initial impression of the sermon? What image of God does the preacher portray in the sermon? How does the preacher deal with Scripture? What is the preacher's relationship with the audience? What role does the preacher play in the event of preaching? Where is the sermon heading?

We then explained the ratio behind our choice of the following five Korean preachers and their representative sermons: Yune Sun Park, Yong Gi Cho, Sun Hee Kwak, Han Hum Oak and Dong Won Lee.

From chapters two to six, with the guidance of the analytical questions, we analysed, in detail, a sermon of each of the five mentioned Korean preachers: Yune Sun Park (ch. 2), Yong Gi Cho (ch. 3), Sun Hee Kwak (ch. 4), Han Hum Oak (ch. 5), and Dong Won Lee (ch. 6). By means of these detailed sermon analyses, we made the following homiletical

discoveries:

Firstly, we observed the fact that the specific God-image used in preaching usually indicates which of the four components of preaching each preacher places emphasis on – God, the Bible, the preacher, or the audience. Thus: the image of God used in preaching differs according to the components that the preacher considers important. For example, Park's devotional adherence to the Word of God and his strong belief in God's sovereignty leads him to emphatically portray the sovereignty and glory of God, but with an ethical overtone. Furthermore, in some cases, the preacher's unique theological perspective controls the main content of the sermon analysed. For example, Kwak's emphasis on God as the Author of history and the divine dispensation, reveals his eschatological consciousness, and this can clearly be detected in his sermon. Oak's ecclesiology emphasizes two attributes of the church, and this motivates him to preach about the consoling God and also the God who wants ethical commitment. In other cases, the preacher's communicative strategy plays a crucial, and indeed identifiable role in his preaching. For example, Lee's informal delivery mode helps him to portray a specific evangelical image of God.

Secondly, we analysed the five sermons while questioning how they interpreted and used the Bible. We observed the fact that, when dealing with the Scriptures, the preachers' foci also relate to their theological foci, whether on the Word of God, or on the congregational context. For example, in Park and Oak's cases, the textual integrity of the sermons seem to be firmly based on the preachers' theological conviction of the Word of God and their responsibility to preach it. But Cho's sermon reveals that the preacher's burning intention to meet the congregational need controlled the text interpretation in such a way that it failed to honour the specific thrust of the text. In comparison to these three preachers, Kwak and Lee's sermons indicate that they reformulated the essence of the text in relation to the congregational context, without endangering this essence.

Our sermon analysis also revealed that each preacher's unique view of the audience influences their communicative strategy. For example, Park's view of the audience, as those who are on a pilgrimage toward the heavenly home guided by the Word of God, leads him to preach with an interactive oscillation between a positive instruction and a negative reproach. In Kwak and Lee's sermons, the modes of delivery take on a warmer and more informal tone because they approach the audience in terms of a specific communicative strategy.

Lastly, we observed that each preacher's sermon had unique results or possible applications in the individual, ecclesial, and socio-political sphere, and narrowed it down by suggesting the following specific (possible) reactions, all of which imply the preacher's unique

emphasis in the preaching ministry: spiritual urgency and commitment (Park and Oak), pastoral consolation with willing agreement (Kwak, Oak, Lee), ecclesial consciousness of church purity (Park), quietude and comfort (Kwak), and socio-political commitment (Kwak, Oak, Lee).

Through these observations, we noted that the God-images used by preachers are usually confined to the specific pastoral interests or theological emphasis that the preacher has in mind, surfacing from existential experience, theological perspective, or pastoral context. This observation reminded us of the homiletical importance of an appropriate Reformed homiletical view on the role of the preacher, especially in the light of our study: preaching the divine presence to a specific audience, from a specific Biblical text. Our presupposition that preaching should be understood within the matrix of the four sermonic components: God, the Scriptures, the preacher, and the congregation, was again validated.

With this matrix of the four components of preaching in mind, we examined and discussed a normative foundation for preaching the divine presence in detail, in view of: God (ch. 8), the Scriptures (ch. 9), preacher (ch. 10), and the audience (ch. 11). In each chapter, we also made several strategic suggestions in relation to Korean preaching.

In chapter 8, we took the matter of the use of God - images in preaching into consideration, under certain theological headings: Based upon the pneumatological dimension of preaching, we first concluded that the preaching of the divine presence should take place in a linguistic and ecclesial frame, rather than using a mystical, experiential, or emotional approach to the divine presence. In the extended line of the linguistic and ecclesial approach, we also confirmed the importance of the Christian narrative, which is understood as the pneumatological and linguistic meeting and tension between the identity narrative of the Christian community and the individual's narrative. In this linguistic and ecclesial meeting, God's redemptive world is proclaimed as presented in the Bible, and His people are invited to participate in this world.

In the light of these findings, we made our first strategic suggestions for Korean preaching. We suggested a transformative hermeneutical frame for preaching the divine presence, as alternative to the spiritual and emotional impression, usually emphasized in Korean preaching. Secondly, individual and apolitical images in Korean preaching were criticized and communal and socio-political images were alternatively put forth. Lastly, the matter of God-images and suffering were tackled, and we identified the homiletical importance of a transformative hermeneutical scheme to guide Korean Christians to an appropriate response to suffering.

In chapter 9, we addressed the question of how the voice of the Bible should be heard when preaching the divine presence, and made three strategic suggestions for Korean preaching. Here, we first examined the Bible's sacramental character of mediating the divine presence, and expounded the homiletical significance of Christocentricity in preaching. After discussing the Bible's divine authority and function, we examined a hermeneutical frame that could be helpful in bringing about an encounter with God when reading the Bible. Here, three dimensions of the hermeneutical act, i.e. explanation, understanding, and assessment, were discussed, and the following two practical meanings of text understanding were suggested: a transformative encounter and a socially acquired ability in the community. Based upon this hermeneutical foundation, a possible hermeneutical procedure for facilitating the God-human encounter was suggested mainly from Riebert's three metaphoric processes: orientation, disorientation, and reorientation. Lastly, Buttrick's double structure of an interpretative consciousness (being-saved-in-the-world) was suggested as a practical exegetical frame to interpretatively bridge the two worlds: that of the Bible and of the contemporary reader. Furthermore, *Lectio Divina* was added as one of the more practical guides for reading the Bible, specifically in relation to the calling to preach the divine presence.

In the light of these discussions, the following three homiletical strategic suggestions were made. The first focus was on Korean preaching's overemphasis of the transcendental dimension in text interpretation, while ignoring a more objective and holistic dimension. With this biased exegetical tendency in mind, we emphasized that Korean preaching should also pay attention to the historical and syntactical context of the written text. Secondly, we noted that, in some cases, the preacher's biased theological perspective is so strong that it ignores the text's own exegetical direction and intention. Lastly, in connection with the exegetical goal in Korean preaching, we mentioned that the individual appropriation of the text's meaning is prone, not only to promote distorted God-images, but also to fail in nurturing a healthy congregation that is able to read the Bible appropriately. From these observations, a more objective exegetical frame, that pays attention to the historical and syntactical interpretation of texts, was alternatively suggested.

In chapter 10, we examined the question of the preacher's role in preaching the divine presence. Here, we first took a look at the place of the preacher as standing in-between God and the audience, and his or her role in delivering a verbal and mediatory witness of the divine presence. The preacher's triple consciousness was also discussed: spirituality (before God), integrity (before the audience) and conviction (before the self). With a view to the preacher's spirituality, we discussed the importance of the devotional life, through which preachers' vertical encounter with God is enhanced by their horizontal relationship toward

others. The matter of integrity was understood as a specific ethos that reflects preachers' personal engagement with God. Thirdly, the importance of a preacher's conviction was dealt with in view of the fact that the exigency and authenticity of an encounter with God has crucial implications not only for the content, but also the mode of preaching. With these normative perspectives on the preacher in mind, we lastly made suggestions concerning the role of the preacher in Korea, stressing the importance of being an incarnational witness of God, which combines the preacher's mediatory role with a more egalitarian and exemplary approach, corresponding to the congregation's engagement and struggle with the mysterious and problematic divine presence-in-absence in their lives.

In chapter 11, we addressed the role that the audience (congregation) plays in the preaching of the divine presence. We first defined the audience in relation to the other three components of preaching: God (the congregation therefore as a theological, pneumatological, and eschatological entity), the Bible (the congregation as a hermeneutical entity), and the preacher (the congregation as a communicative entity). In addition to these definitions, we also examined the audience according to the reception axis of the Word: the congregation as individual beings (with a human heart and paradigmatic imagination), as an ecclesial and communal being (the divine presence experienced through pastoral role-fulfilment), and as one who is engaged in the world (the socio-political responsibility of the church). We furthermore discussed an appropriate communicative strategy for preaching the divine presence, specifically in Korea, under the headings: The image of God who is present in suffering, the communicative frame of the poor in spirit, and the four linguistic dimensions of witness: confessional, evocative, hermeneutic, and imaginative.

We also pointed out the following three general characteristics of the Korean audience: communal personality, affective preference in the epistemological frame, and the high spiritual sensibility and expectation. In addition, we made the following three communicative suggestions: an egalitarian mode of sermon delivery rather than a hierarchical mode; an imaginary sermon development rather than a cognitive and dogmatic development; and an interpretative approach to the divine presence in real life, rather than an affective emphasis focused upon temporal amusement.

2. Conclusion

From this homiletical study, we would like to contribute the following two humble, but hopefully constructive suggestions for the preaching of the divine presence Korea.

Firstly, that God-images in Korean preaching should be implemented within the comprehensive homiletical frame that we have advocated so far, harmoniously involving all

four components of preaching: the Holy Spirit, the Bible, the preacher, and the audience. As we observed in the five sermon analyses, Korean sermons lean towards a partial emphasis of some of these four components, resulting in an overestimation of, for instance, the role of a mere devotional human preacher, the preacher's unique theological emphasis, a communicative strategic focus on the audience, or a parochial emphasis on expository preaching.

In my opinion, preaching should rather be understood as a sermonic symphony in which all four voices, namely that of God, the Scripture, the preacher, and the audience harmoniously blend. This is the mystery of, but also the challenge for Korean preaching that intends to proclaim the presence of the divine. When these four components, or rather musical scores, find their rightful positions in the symphony, the living voice of the almighty God will again be heard with life-giving power in Korea. This is my belief.

Secondly, I would like to suggest that the homiletical scope of the preaching of the divine presence in Korea should be broadened to include the socio-political sphere. According to our examination, Korean preaching tends to be limited to ecclesial or parochial boundaries only, ignoring the broader context within which the divine presence can be identified. Moreover, Korean audiences that have a high spiritual sensibility and expectation are prone to expect (a temporal experience of) the divine presence in a sermonic or liturgical context only. However, as we pointed out continually, preaching of the divine presence is more than a dogmatic explanation; it must, rather, seek and foster an appropriate hermeneutical life style through which the church is invited to find and follow the footsteps of the divine presence in the world. We sincerely hope that our homiletical study will have contributed somewhat, especially to these areas in Korean preaching.

It is clear, though, that more intensive research on factual Korean preaching is needed, and, indeed, urgent. Although our study has involved the analyses of five representative Korean sermons, it does not offer a general weather chart that will show how the divine presence is proclaimed in all Korean pulpits. That would be an enormous undertaking, and certainly beyond the scope of this study. Hopefully, we did set the homiletical table for an ongoing feast of research.

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1 Rev. Dr. Yune Sun Park Date: 1984.10.15 Text: 2 Cor. 6:3-10 Title: Paul's model in the gospel
2 ministry

3 The title of the Word that we, on this occasion, are going to think of together is 'Paul's model in the
4 gospel ministry.' In his ministry for the gospel, Paul established many exemplary models. I cannot
5 mention all of them now; I will just describe some that are presented in 2 Corinthians chapter 6.

6 When Paul worked for the Lord, as it is written in verse 3, he "put no stumbling block in anyone's
7 path, so that our ministry will not be discredited." Here 'ministry' doesn't mean some kind of
8 functional duty. Rather, it means that Paul works with the gospel; not the duties of say, apostle,
9 pastor, teacher, or elder, but ministry and service. This ministry means the service, and tells here that
10 when Paul himself works with the gospel, he does so in the spirit of service, which is the spirit of
11 ministry.

12 Sometimes we ministers begin to consider ourselves akin to those who hold some high status. In
13 spite of ourselves, we easily forget the fact that we do not hold some office, but are the servants, and
14 even lower than ordinary lay people, and should serve them, suffer, and work more than they do.
15 This is really unusual. All the Apostles and workers mentioned in the Bible, including the Apostle
16 Paul, worked with the mental attitude of serving all without any exception. How can the modern
17 ministers or officers differ from this?

18 It is the mind to serve that is the real attitude God wants. In 2 Corinthians chapter 4, "We do not
19 preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake." In this
20 Word are two objects that the Apostle Paul serves: one is Jesus Christ, and the other object is the
21 church. "Jesus Christ as Lord." This means Jesus is the Lord of Paul himself. "We preach Jesus
22 Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake." This means Paul never preached
23 himself. "We do not preach ourselves." That is the essence.

24 It is really easy to work for the gospel. But there are so many ministers who make it difficult, and
25 with the pose 'I work for it.' This work can be done easily. But it isn't done well because they make
26 it difficult. It becomes difficult because these ministers want to be treated well. Because they want to
27 preach themselves, to have their names honored, to live a comfortable life, and because they work
28 with a selfish attitude, the work becomes difficult. How do you think such work can be done well?
29 How dare do you expect our living Lord will to assist such work? Nothing can be more difficult than
30 to do the work of God without His help. Nothing removes joy further from you. It is quite natural
31 that when I preach myself I receive condemnation. We are not in a position to preach ourselves. If
32 we just live our own worldly lives in the worldly manner, rather than putting ourselves in a position
33 to serve the church of the Lord, then, we would not rebel against our Lord. But when you are really
34 working for yourselves, to say 'I am working for God' is really to deceive God, and to rebel against
35 Him. Thus, to do such contradictory work, without the help of God, with no joy, and no communion

1 with heaven is a most difficult thing to do.

2 We are not those who preach ourselves, but preach Jesus Christ as Lord. We preach Jesus Christ as
3 Lord. This means that I am the servant of the Lord. It is really easy to live as the servant of the Lord.
4 Because our minds fail us, and want to do other things, we feel we have committed theft; there is no
5 joy, the work won't be done well, and we just waste time. It would be easy if we knew only how to
6 abase ourselves, and humbled, but we won't. It is difficult because we just want to be elevated
7 without being humbled. No matter how eagerly we want to ascend, it can never be done and the
8 work just remains difficult. It is written, "we preach ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake." So,
9 the minister is the servant of the church. Even though they were ordained for the church, they
10 consider this office as entirely their own and, even exploit and devour the church. Moreover they
11 sometimes commit a great sin, and mock the church of God. In other words, they abandon the
12 church to a situation of ignorance of the truth, as they do not know how to enlighten the church.
13 They should want to lead the church to a high position, even better than themselves, so that the
14 church might be enlightened in the truth. The ministers do not work for the church and, even though
15 the believers still remain ignorant of the truth for several decades, the ministers are not concerned
16 about this. Don't you think this is the present situation of some churches whose servants have rather
17 adopted them as their servants?

18 We should never consider this perspective of duty to be just idealism; More ridiculous and idealistic
19 are those church workers who make themselves the center of the ministry. This is really impossible
20 and idealistic. If they want to do easy work in an easy way, let them just be humbled. It is difficult to
21 climb up. Isn't it easy to go down? Really did the Apostle Paul seek and work hard to magnify the
22 ministry! This ministry means *diakonia*, in other words, work like 'to serve,' or 'to attend'. It means
23 to serve in action from beginning to end. Those who do the work of God are dead to themselves
24 indeed. The Apostle Paul says in 2 Corinthians chapter 15, "I die every day." This clearly shows how
25 he walked every day: as he practiced dying every day, it meant dying to himself, and seeking the
26 work that he had committed himself to do. Among these works, we may think of the preaching
27 ministry. The preacher must die to himself, and do his best to let the Word of God be presented as it
28 is. In other words, I have to die, as I am just a servant who ministers this work, so that the Lord
29 himself may speak the Word of the Scriptures. The preacher has to prepare his preaching with the
30 last energy of his life. Richard Baxter says of preaching, "preaching is to speak as a dying man to
31 dying man." It is to speak as a dying man to dying man. It is to deliver the last one word. 'I am dying.
32 You are dying as well, Listen to this word.'

33 It is not only preaching that follows this. If we stand in a position to serve the church, then we have
34 to serve every ministry of the church in that way from beginning to end, bearing in mind that I die so
35 that the work of God may be done as the Word of God intends, and so that God may be pleased. This
36 work of God should be done with the same urgent tension with which a dying person performs one
37 last work for another who is dying. Here the Apostle Paul says, "Put no stumbling block in anyone's

1 path, so that our ministry will not be discredited.” Here the word was translated as ‘ministry.’ In
2 order not to block the ministry to serve, he emptied himself just like one who is nothing, like one
3 who is dying, and looking forward only to the work of the Lord presented in truth, and only for this
4 purpose he worked to the last moment of his life.

5 Paul says in verse 4, “he commends himself as servant of God.” He didn’t take office with a
6 recommendation letter from others. He simply commends himself with his own résumé. It was the
7 office recommended by himself. In 2 Corinthians chapter 3 verse 3, “Paul’s recommendation was
8 written not with ink, but the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human
9 hearts.” In this way, the self-recommendation of Paul is a very unusual one. In fact, to the worker for
10 God, self-recommendation is the most powerful and authoritative recommendation. This self-
11 recommendation is written “on tablets of human hearts.” In other words, this means personality. It is
12 the very personality of Paul himself that is the recommendation, the self-recommendation. In verse 4
13 it is written, “As servants of God we commend ourselves in every way.” The content of Paul’s self-
14 recommendation is that he endured 8 different kinds of difficulties. From the latter part of verse 4 till
15 verse 5, Paul said 8 kinds difficulties. “In great endurance.” This means to endure the following
16 difficulties. How many are they? 8 kinds of difficulties! “In troubles, hardships and distresses; in
17 beatings, imprisonments and riots; in hard work, sleepless nights and hunger.” These he bore with
18 great endurance.

19 Only the minister who considers suffering as his friend, he is the real minister who does God’s work.
20 God selects one out of thousands, one out of ten thousands. But you know that this work of God
21 cannot be done by any human. Thus, if you think this difficult work is given to us, this work that is
22 not to be found anywhere, then, with the resolution that - even though I was ignorant of the grace of
23 God - from now on I will accomplish this precious work well, so that our Lord may be pleased, with
24 this resolution to die, I have to do my best, to the last point of my life, in all great endurance. We
25 have to think in this way: from now on, I am going to die; this is the way to die. I am not telling you
26 some pleasantly to listen to, not just uttering something sentimental. I am telling you this, because
27 the Word of our Lord, which never passes away amid the heaven and earth that will do pass away,
28 this Word itself proclaims, from beginning to end, that we have to do the work of God in this way.
29 This work can never be done if we escape from suffering. But who likes to experience suffering? Yet
30 suffering is treasure; I repeat suffering is treasure. Who wants to bear suffering? Whenever anyone
31 hears the word ‘suffering,’ they frown, and turn their mind away from it. This is the normal person’s
32 instinct. Then, what is meant by the saying, ‘those who work for God should make suffering their
33 friend?’ It is like that because the character of the work of God is so. Without endurance to die, no
34 one can win. Without endurance to the point of death, nothing can be done. We are not ready even to
35 think of suffering. Thus, when I say ‘we have to regard suffering as a friend,’ the natural person is
36 inclined not to accept. But it is because we are those who live not after instinct, but after the truth.
37 And only when the work should be done according to the will of the Lord, can we acquire the

1 treasure of heaven. Thus we cannot turn away from accepting suffering as a friend.

2 Even though it is difficult to bear suffering, there is a secret to bear it. It can be borne in love. Love
3 doesn't know toil. Do we really love someone? Then, we don't know toil. Humans can't live without
4 loving someone. We live with the joy to love. How can we live without an object to love?

5 Then, should we not be thankful that we have the authority to love the Lord? If we are really sure of
6 loving God, then, to suffer isn't so distasteful. Furthermore, because the Lord helps us, it isn't so
7 difficult. The Lord says in John chapter 14 verse 21, "Whoever has my commands and obeys them,
8 he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him
9 and show myself to him." Does the Lord tell a lie? No. "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my
10 words will never pass away." Try to appreciate the great truth of the Lord's Word. How can it be?
11 What is meant by the words, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass
12 away?" Doesn't this word affirm that His word will surely be done as it is said? Concretely speaking,
13 when I obey the commandment of the Lord with all my heart, obey it faithfully, before the eyes of
14 the Lord, when I keep this Word, God the Father will love me, and the Lord also will love me and
15 show Himself to me. How blessed we are! To us who bear suffering through the love for God, God
16 has promised to provide tearful consolation and love and strength those cannot be experienced in
17 this world. How blessed are we who may live in this spiritual tension to receive the thing more
18 precious than any other in this world?

19 We don't always need to think suffering is difficult. There is the case according to which suffering is
20 considered as difficult. There is the position that bears it with difficulty. Suffering is not always
21 distasteful, not always bitter, and not always difficult to bear. The problem is whom we have to love.

22 Secondly, There are four means of gospel ministry. Four means are expressed, starting from verse 6:
23 "In purity and knowledge, patience and mercy; in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love; in truthful
24 speech and in the power of God." Four means of the ministry are detailed.

25 "In purity and knowledge." This is a means of the gospel ministry. We can't work without
26 knowledge. This knowledge is acquired in the pure heart: it is the knowledge to know God. In fact,
27 the knowledge to know God is the knowledge to see God. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they
28 will see God." The knowledge to see God is not theoretical. Because this is about spiritual brightness,
29 those who have this knowledge can receive and give forth great power. "In purity and knowledge."
30 What's purity? As you well know, it is like clean water. When we look at clean water, we can't find
31 any dust or speck in it. Nothing can be strained out. This clean water reminds us of the pure heart,
32 which is just like water without any dust or speck. Pouring this water into a bowl and looking into it,
33 we can clearly see through it to the bottom without any murkiness. It is as clean and transparent as
34 the air.

35 However, because our heart is dim, with so many specks as it were, and not like the clean water, so

1 the problem arises. God is pleased with the pure heart. It is our heart that God is pleased with. He is
2 pleased when we offer our heart. But it should be a pure heart, rather than a dirty heart. This means
3 developing a great passion for God but without any greed for other things. It is a passion that desires
4 God only. That is the pure heart. Only when we have this pure heart do we see God. It is the heart
5 that escorts God. Only through seeing God with our own eyes, is the power given forth. I don't say
6 that theoretical knowledge acquired by study isn't necessary; but it is less than seeing with the eyes.
7 The point is about seeing God with our own eyes, not with the physical eyes, but with the spiritual
8 eyes. I can't describe it in words, but it really is so. Only when we acquire knowledge in a pure heart,
9 can we obtain the power to move the world.

10 Someone said, when Luther saw God, he was not afraid of Rome, and all priests throughout the
11 world trembled. I have seen the saying, when John Knox saw God, there was such a great movement
12 that all Scotland was held within Knox's hand. We should see God. There is no power in theoretical
13 knowledge; we really should have the knowledge to see.

14 The second (means of ministry) is mercy. "Patience and mercy!" Mercy is the heart that feels pity. It
15 is an attitude of feeling compassion. It is an activity of feeling pity. It is a personality that maintains
16 pity. This compassion is acquired through long endurance. When we say a word, we have to
17 remember compassion. "Isn't this saying going to break him?" We have to keep this in mind so that
18 no matter what we say, if we say it for Lord's sake, then, it is safe. No matter if it makes someone
19 displeased, they will not lose in the end. Whenever a word is spoken for the Lord's sake, the result is
20 a change. When it is spoken for the Lord's sake, even the piercing word becomes an injection for
21 health that doesn't hurt in the end. The important consideration is, for whom am I doing this. When
22 it is done for the Lord who has created heaven and earth, that saying can demonstrate the power to
23 build the collapsed and save the dead.

24 Only when we learn perseverance, can we attain mercy and compassion. Perseverance means
25 whatever we say and do, we act only after thinking deeply and often about it, only after praying for
26 the will of God, whether it is for God's sake or not, only thereafter then must we act according to the
27 will of God. Only when we keep patience, can we acquire the means of mercy. It is written in James
28 chapter 2 verse 13, "Mercy triumphs over judgment and boasts."¹ When the worker of God has
29 mercy, how powerful he is? Doesn't 'to triumph over judgment and to boast' mean 'to exceed in
30 winning over judgment?' This is the way to become a worker who keeps composure and has
31 abundant means for the gospel ministry.

32 To have mercy doesn't always mean to have mercy on the adversary of God. The Scriptures do not.
33 It doesn't mean to allow what God doesn't want. To have mercy means, in order to save a life and to
34 glorify God through this, to look into the spirit perishing away, with a burning desire and with words,

¹ The Korean Bible adds 'and boasts.'

1 and with compassionate action, to maintain perseverance to the last point of my life and to do my
2 utmost best for the gospel. This is triumph over judgment, and this is the mean for boasting.

3 Moreover, "The influence of the Holy Spirit and unfeigned love." This speaks of love. Without the
4 influence of the Holy Spirit, we cannot love other human beings. The influence of the Holy Spirit, in
5 other words, the work to exert the influence of the Holy Spirit upon men, leads them to the Lord.
6 The only one way to lead people to God is through the influence of the Holy Spirit. There is the
7 personal influence that draws people through personal attraction. But that is false love. It leads
8 people just to self. But unfeigned love becomes the worker through the influence of the Holy Spirit.
9 The worker who ministers without the influence of the Holy Spirit deceives people throughout his
10 life.

11 To be filled with the Holy Spirit, we should go deep into the Word of Scripture and be melted away
12 there in such a way as to become one with the Bible. If we just study the Bible superficially, and
13 pretend to know it, this influence is never acquired. Deep into the Word, toward the deep point of the
14 abundant taste, the point of listening to the gentle sound, and myself melted away, only there, when I
15 first experience the wonderful influence of the Holy Spirit, and deliver it to others, only there is the
16 influence of the Holy Spirit set forth. Without entering deep into the Bible, how can we receive the
17 influence of the Holy Spirit? How can a shallow and superficial worker receive it? God is never
18 superficial. Because God wants sincerity, He is pleased with the sincerity that digs to the last point
19 and seeks to acquire this influence. God is never pleased with the superficial trick of playing with
20 the Word. The worker of God should enter deep into the Word. This Word of God has created heaven
21 and earth. And this is the Word of the influence of the Holy Spirit, which has made all true men.
22 How can these people - ignoring and looking down on the Word, avoiding entering deep into it, and
23 just treating it in a superficial way - how can these workers deliver the truth of God?

24 To be filled with the Holy Spirit, we should be melted into prayer. If we pray just in outward
25 appearance, being compelled to adopt a prayer time according to order, and just pretending to pray
26 in a superficial form, then, what kind of prayer is this? In prayer we have to eagerly cling to the Lord
27 and throw all of ourselves on Him, deep into Him. Without the influence of the Holy Spirit, we will
28 never be able to preach. Without the influence of the Holy Spirit, we will never be able to
29 accomplish the work for the Lord. It is written "In truthful Word and in the power of God." We can
30 acquire this truthful Word when we come to realize it through prayer or the study of the Bible, or
31 when the Lord speaks in the Word of Scripture on the matter that we trust to God. All of these
32 convey the Word of truth. When this Word of truth is delivered, the power of God is set forth. When
33 the Word of truth is heard, those who listen to it become born again. 1 Thessalonians chapter 1 verse
34 5 implies that when the Word of truth was delivered, the Thessalonians were converted.

35 The third (means of ministry) is a double-edged strategy. "With weapons of righteousness in the
36 right hand and in the left." The followings explain this: "Through glory and dishonor, bad report and

1 good report.” “Through glory and dishonor.” In the true work for God, three are sometimes
2 occasions for receiving glory and praise. “Thank you so much. I have received much grace. Through
3 Reverend’s works and preaching, I have received grace.” Or “Through Reverend’s sacrificial
4 ministry, I have received grace.” Sometimes we may hear these praises. But we don’t do God’s work
5 with these praises. When we hear these praises, we must be alarmed and secretly turn these praises
6 to God. When hearing such praise, if I keep it to myself, it amounts to rebellion against God. He
7 detests it. As it is written in Luke chapter 16, “What is highly valued among men is detestable in
8 God’s sight.” To keep the praise to myself ruins God’s work. God can be glorified and His work
9 done only through the exceptional and sincere struggle, only when I, with a mind made
10 uncomfortable of these praises from people, turn all to God. Only then, can God’s work be done.

11 And “through dishonor.” Workers for God are sometimes slandered. Spurgeon once said, “He who
12 has never endured slander is like the person who tries to fish without hook.” Because he avoids the
13 difficult thing and just wants to please people, he is never able to do the work which includes slander.
14 Sometimes, very difficult work needs slander. Such work is never achieved with praise only. If we
15 are dishonored for God’s sake isn’t it a great honor? Isn’t it the very thing that makes the work
16 complete? Even if we are dishonored, God works for himself.

17 “Through bad report and good report.” This is similar to the above. Paul was slandered with the
18 name of plague. You such one who spreads the pestilential epidemic! This slanders the Gospel, and
19 Paul at the same time. It slanders Paul as one who spreads the plague. We also may hear such a bad
20 report. Even in such a bad report, if we are really working for God and His will, there should be no
21 fear or depression in our heart. “Through bad report and good report.” You know what a beautiful
22 name Paul received. He was even named as God. In Acts chapter 14, Paul was named as Zeus. But
23 he was very displeased about that; he felt such a horrible fear of imminent thunder from heaven.
24 Only when we become displeased and feel fear of being glorified, is God pleased and glorified. If
25 we accept beautiful praise and pose as those who deserve it, feeling satisfied with it, then, our
26 attitude spoils the work of God and ruins ourselves as well. “Through bad report and good report.”
27 With both of these in mind, we have to work at the ministry. This is what the saying “With weapons
28 of righteousness in the right hand and in the left” means. Since only God is glorified, wherever we
29 go, we can always win.

30 I will bring this sermon to an end by telling you the fourth (means of ministry). The fourth means is
31 ‘internal-ism.’ It means that reality is inside. People sometimes misunderstand and fail to recognize
32 us. But we don’t need to care about that. The outside looks poor, but inside all is well. In the latter
33 part of verse 8 is written, “genuine, yet regarded as impostors.” There is the appearance of and
34 impostor. When we deliver the Word of the Bible as it is, worldly people call us liars. If we deliver
35 the Scripture as it is, the band of devils spreads lies that ‘they deceive people.’ “Genuine, yet
36 regarded as impostors!” Because we deliver the Word as the Bible says, as is surely genuine.
37 “Known, yet regarded as unknown.” The outer shape is very poor, it has nothing that can be praised.

1 This is what differs from the hypocrite. They disguise so much; they seem to have grace, seem to
2 have power, look wise and attractive to everyone. But there is nothing inside. Rather the inside is
3 full of bad things. However, the sincere workers for God are known, yet regarded as unknown.
4 Without any ostensible display, people fail to recognize them. But they are known; they are known
5 to God Himself! "Dying, yet we live on." The outer shape that shows them is very poor because that
6 isn't the goal. Nothing outward is fine. They are those who want to grow inwardly. They are those
7 who do their best by dedicating themselves to what pleases God. They serve the Lord who sees what
8 is done in secret. They seem dying, but they live on. "Beaten, and yet not killed; sorrowful, yet
9 always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything." This
10 is 'internal-ism.'

11 So many workers give their best to appearance only, seeking to make themselves known through
12 advertisements, fame, mass-communication, TV, and through all other gimmicks of modern
13 technology, and even drawing themselves up to heaven. But inside they become more withered,
14 there is nothing alive, and no communion with the spiritual world at all. Isn't this all the really
15 miserable phenomenon of the contemporary (church situation)?

16 No matter about people's recognition, by the desire to listen to the gentile sound, we have to first of
17 all dedicate everything to God only. Only if we seek to reform first of all ourselves to the last point
18 of life, to the very moment of death, only when we cling to the true contention of the Scriptures and
19 follow the impulse to live out the truth even as the minority of the world, will we surely witness the
20 glorious scene that the Word of the Lord is realized at last, that a grain of mustard seed grows and
21 grows until at last it becomes a huge tree.

22 Today, I have shared this word entitled, "Paul's model in the gospel ministry." We are born for God's
23 sake; believe in Jesus for the Lord's sake, and work in the church for God's sake. With the desire
24 that, in this age, the work for the Lord will be done through a sincere attitude to life like that of the
25 Apostle Paul, I have spoken this Word. (Congregation answers Amen.)

26 Let's pray

27 God our Father, thank you so much. While living upon this earth, we are flesh, and are used to going
28 astray in a way that displeases the Lord, are used to thinking thoughts that the Lord doesn't want, are
29 used to doing many acts that the Lord doesn't want. Lord! Have mercy on us, forgive us, renew us,
30 and give us your grace, so that in this disordered and dangerous age we may live and walk with you,
31 Lord, and we may rightly accomplish your work.

32 God the Father! Give your grace to this synod, so that, oh Lord, they may improve themselves with
33 the 'internal-ism' and exceed in winning over thousands and ten thousands, and so that each one of
34 us will listen to the gentle sound before the Lord, and become those soldiers who are able to save
35 themselves first and then others as well. In Jesus Christ's name I pray.

1 **Rev. Yonggi Cho 2000.10. 18. Text: 2 Cor 6:1-2 Title: The blessing that God has prepared**

2 Today I am going to share the Word with you in the title of “The blessing that God has prepared.”

3 It is the mother who prepares the tasteful dinner for the children. But it is their responsibility to go
4 and enjoy the meal themselves when mom calls them the table. God has prepared the Garden of
5 Eden. But it is Adam himself who is responsible for keeping and maintaining it, because God
6 allowed it. God has given the Israelites the land of Canaan. But it is the duty of Israel to enter and
7 conquer the land. In this way, no matter how much grace God has prepared for us, if we do not go
8 and get it, it is useless. No matter how many ripe persimmons there are on the tree, if we don't go
9 and pick one, and just wait for one to fall into our mouth by itself, we will never be able to eat one.

10 Firstly, we have to know the truth that God has created and prepared for our sake. It is written in
11 First Corinthians chapter 2 verse 9, “As it is written: No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has
12 conceived what God has prepared for those who love him.” For you, brothers and sisters, God has
13 prepared tremendous grace and blessing. But so many people do not know of this. As they do not
14 know, they can't get it.

15 During the Korean War, there was a plague of bedbugs and fleas that swept throughout the land. My
16 family also was sick and tired of these fleas. At that time, the US Army base had a great deal of
17 D.D.T. If we sprayed D.D.T, we could get rid of all these bedbugs and fleas, which carried diseases.
18 So we asked the neighboring uncle who worked at the army base to please bring us D.D.T. powder.
19 He said, “I can't speak English, even one single word. I can't recognize what D.D.T is.” “Uncle!
20 How can you not speak English, even when you are working at the US army base?” Instead of
21 bringing the powder, he pushed me to learn the English alphabet. So I learned by heart ABCDEFG
22 all through the night. Then, I used to visit the army base, and while I was wandering around the
23 army base, some letters of this alphabet on the label of a drum caught my eye. Since I had learnt the
24 ABC by heart, I went to read the label. It was D.D.T. “Isn't this D.D.T powder?” The drum, which
25 was cast away, was filled with white D.D.T. powder. Bringing that powder home, and spraying it on
26 our bodies, inside our clothes, and all over the house, we got rid of all bedbugs, fleas, and lice. Even
27 D.D.T powder can be applied only when we recognize it. Unless we know about them, so many
28 things are just meaningless to us.

29 God speaks to us, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new
30 has come!” God has prepared the wonderful grace of the new. But since we don't know the new, and
31 are still clinging to the old, we can't get the new. It is written in the Bible that new wine is poured
32 into new wineskins. God has prepared the new life and new blessing for us. If we don't know about
33 it, it is totally useless. We have to know this truth. Isn't it only when we know this blessing that God
34 has prepared for our sake, that we are able to throw off the old rags from our mind, and put on the
35 cloth of the new knowledge? Our mind has to be made anew in the salvational grace of God.
36 Brothers and sisters! Our mind is the vessel containing God's grace. Without the vessel prepared in

1 our mind, we can't receive the grace of God. We have to put into our mind the knowledge of grace
2 that God has prepared through Jesus' cross, the knowledge that we are forgiven, and have become
3 righteous through the precious blood of the cross. We must put into our mind the knowledge that,
4 through the power of the precious blood, demon and world have been driven out, and the Holy Spirit
5 and heaven have come to us. We must put into our mind the knowledge that, through the power of
6 the precious blood of Jesus Christ, stress and sadness and agony of heart all disappear, God offers
7 joy to us, and that by his wounds we are healed. Brothers and sisters! We have to fill our mind with
8 the idea that we are those who have become free from the curse, thanks to God, and have received
9 success and blessing because we have received the grace and blessing of Christ. Let's throw away
10 the old rags of the curse, poverty, frustration, and disappointment, and fill ourselves with the new
11 mind. We have to wear the new mind that, through his resurrection, the Lord has demolished death
12 and hell. Throw away the old mind and put on the new mind! In the name of the Lord, I am
13 supplicating God for blessings on all of you who have put on the mind that God has prepared; May
14 you have good health, may everything go well with you, even as your soul prospers.

15 Brothers and sisters! We do what we think. If the mind puts on the old, tired, and bad smelling rags,
16 God can't fill us with the new grace. We do not put new wine in old wineskins. Our Lord doesn't
17 sew a patch of new cloth on an old garment. Because a new patch goes on new cloth, and new wine
18 into new wineskins, through the redemptive grace of the cross of Jesus Christ, we have to be born
19 again to a new dress and new wineskin. The Bible says, "Above all else guard your heart, for it is the
20 wellspring of life." Thus only when we have made the mind anew, can we win with the cloth of
21 knowledge that what the Lord has prepared for us. Today even though you see nothing in your eyes,
22 hear nothing in your ears, and hold nothing in your palms, in the name of the Lord, I am supplicating
23 God for blessings all of you that your mind put on the new garments, and be transformed with the
24 fivefold gospels and the threefold blessings which Christ has fulfilled through the cross for your
25 sake.

26 Secondly, we have to get the desire and the dream. If we do not have a burning desire for the
27 blessing of God, He can never work for our sake. In Psalms 37 verse 4 is written, "Delight yourself
28 in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart." In our bosom should be these burning
29 desires. There should be the wish that eagerly seeks God and wants to receive the grace from Jesus.
30 In the Bible we read of the twelve spies who explored the land of Canaan at *Kadesh Barnea* for forty
31 days and forty nights. After listening to their reports, no one has any desire to enter Canaan. The
32 spies say, "That land devours those living in it, the cities are fortified, those living there are the
33 descendants of Anak from the Nephiiim, and we seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes; we can't
34 go and attack them." The Israelites really did not desire to enter Canaan. Rather they wished to go
35 back to Egypt. But Joshua and Caleb did desire to enter the land of Canaan. It is written, Caleb
36 silenced the people before Moses and said, "We should go up and take possession of the land, for we
37 can certainly do it." But the men who had gone up with him said, "We can't attack those people;

1 they are stronger than we are.” Thus God immediately killed those ten people, and sent the other
2 people who had no desire to enter Canaan into the desert, and made them wander around the desert
3 until they all died. Only Joshua and Caleb, who had the desire, were able to enter Canaan.

4 Once when Jesus was passing a town, a man ran out who was completely covered with leprosy, fell
5 with his face to the ground, and said, “Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean.” Brothers
6 and sisters! At this time, if a leper approached normal people in this way, he was stoned to death.
7 When approaching healthy people, the leper had to announce himself, “Unclean! Unclean! Do not
8 come close!” If a leper approach without any warning, he is at risk of his life. Notwithstanding, this
9 leper risked his life, and ran before Jesus and his disciples, knelt down, and begged; “Lord if you are
10 willing, you can make me clean.” Recognizing the burning desire, Jesus reached out his hand and
11 touched the man. “I am willing,” he said, “Be clean!” And immediately the leprosy left him. Not of
12 its own accord, but because the leper earnestly desired to be clean.

13 Brothers and sisters! Look at the Canaanite woman, Matthew chapter 15 verse 27 till 28. While
14 Jesus was taking a rest, this woman, following after Jesus, earnestly begged, “My daughter is
15 suffering terribly from demon-possession. Please heal her!” But Jesus didn’t answer a word. So, she
16 cried out even to the disciples, who came to Jesus, and said, “Why don’t you heal her daughter and
17 send her away?” Jesus firmly denied, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel.” Then, the woman
18 blocked Jesus’ way, knelt before him, and begged again, “Lord please have mercy on me!” Jesus
19 replied, “It is not right to take the children’s bread and toss it to their dogs.” “Yes, Lord,” she said,
20 “but even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master’s table.” Then Jesus answered, “Woman,
21 you have great faith! Your request is granted.” Look at the burning desire of this Canaanite woman.
22 Because she had a burning desire and wish, she persistently clung so as not to lose this chance with
23 Jesus. Because of her burning and persistent desire, this woman’s wish came to be fulfilled.

24 Even though the Lord has prepared this wonderful grace for our sake, we further need to have the
25 burning desire to receive this grace. If we, with this burning desire to receive the grace, attend all
26 Sunday worship, Wednesday worship, cell group meeting, pray at the dawn prayer meeting, cry out
27 at the overnight prayer meeting, and with even more earnest desire, fast and pray at the prayer
28 mountain persistently, then, the Lord surely will answer our prayers. Without the burning desire, if
29 you just imagine that the Lord might give you the grace some day, that blessing can’t be yours. You
30 have to hold the desire and wish. Even though God has prepared all blessings, without the burning
31 desire to seek what He has prepared, that blessings can’t be yours.

32 With this desire, you also need to have the ardent dream. A dream is the blueprint for tomorrow.
33 Your future of what is to be depends on what dream today you have in your heart today. Without the
34 dream in our heart today, we can acquire nothing tomorrow. Only when I look on the cross, and have
35 a dream of what kind of person I have to become, can God work through this dream.

36 You have seen the testimony just before the service began. This man was the American pastor who

1 couldn't move his neck because of injury. No matter what medical treatment he received, he couldn't
2 become healed, and move his body. But as he was listening to my sermon, he visualized his bright
3 blueprint dream to see that he, putting himself behind the cross, was healed through the precious
4 blood of Jesus Christ. Since he, with faith and the dream that he was healed in the name of Jesus,
5 received my prayer, he suddenly recovered.

6 In 1977, I went to Melbourne. Australian church history has recorded this date. There I held a
7 seminar for the pastors of the Assembly of God. During the whole week, the mood in the seminar
8 was as cold as ice. Later on, the leaders even criticized me. They said that the revival might be
9 possible in American, or Korea, but it was never going to happen in Australia. So just before leaving
10 there, I said to them, "My dear friends, if you are going to do nothing else, just have a new vision at
11 least! Through the blueprint in your heart today, God fulfills tomorrow. So bring pen and paper, and
12 jot down from your vision how much bigger your church will grow after 3-5 years. Just have a
13 vision of three hundred people, five hundred people, or two thousand people! No dream, no
14 tomorrow! Without a dream, you will come to nothing!" Humoring me with a loud laugh, they wrote
15 their vision down on paper. So I further urged them to paste this vision in their office, to look on this
16 vision every day when coming in and going out, and to pray in faith that they would be like that
17 tomorrow. As a result, after 1977, among the Assembly of God and other denominations, an
18 outstanding reformation took place. These churches, which had not grown up for ten years, started to
19 grow from that moment. When I visited two years later, I found that all the churches had grown by
20 100 %. Recently, when I once again visited Australia, every pastor flocked to me, and said with one
21 voice that it was 1977, when pastor Cho held the seminar, that changed Australian church history.
22 They have recorded in the church annals that it was this date that marked the outstanding direction
23 of the transformation in their church history. I did nothing. I just said to those never said "Amen!" to
24 my sermon to have a dream. I said, "Since the dream is the blueprint for tomorrow, without a
25 blueprint in the heart, we can't make tomorrow. Have a dream!" As a result of writing their dream in
26 detail, great history has taken place.

27 Today you also need to paste the visionary picture in the gallery of your mind! Do you see so all the
28 drawings hanging on the wall of the art exhibition? Hang up your own work of what to be in your
29 mind's gallery! Hang up the drawing of being forgiven and becoming righteous! The drawing full of
30 the Holy Spirit! Hang up your image full of joy and a positive mind, full of healing in your gallery!
31 Hang up your image that you have been set free from the curse, thanks to the blessing of God in
32 Christ, and that you have received all the blessing and grace from God. Hang up your image that, in
33 heaven, you, after resurrection in a newly transformed shape, will live with Christ forever without
34 any tears, anxiety, lamentation, separation, need, or disease! It is written in Ephesians chapter 3
35 verse 20, "Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to
36 his power that is at work within us." If we change our mind through this very vision and dream, then
37 God is at work through it. Only when we have the desire and vision, are we able to receive the

1 blessing God has prepared.

2 Thirdly, we have to pray and believe that God will answer. It is written in Mark chapter 11 verse 24,
3 “Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be
4 yours.” Prayer is like climbing up to the summit. At first everyone, picking up their bag and
5 fastening their shoestring, climbs up in the cheerful mood. We are full of power and enthusiasm. But
6 about midway, we start to get tired, and feel aches in our legs. Keeping on climbing little bit more,
7 we are completely exhausted, and we want to give up. “I can’t climb the summit.” But only when we
8 stretch perseverance to the last point, can we reach the summit. All the burdens disappear. Fresh air
9 comes deep inside our lungs. We can achieve the wonderful victory of seeing all surroundings below.
10 Prayer is just like this. When we first begin, we are full of resolution to pray for an answer from God.
11 Now I am really going to pray in the name of Jesus, to have a big fight with this demon, and to beat
12 this problem to death. After some time, the answer hasn’t come so quickly. Thus we hesitate to keep
13 praying, “Maybe I’d rather stop now.” But, “Let’s be patient.” “Oh, Father why don’t you answer
14 me? It is so difficult. I can’t keep it up anymore.” But when you overcome that obstacle, all burdens
15 in the heart suddenly disappear. Thus the Bible says, “According to your faith will be done to you.”
16 So we have to pray and believe. After praying, you have to believe, not in your feelings and
17 emotions, but in God. Our feelings and emotions fluctuate daily. So if you depend on your feelings
18 and emotions, there is no future at all.

19 It is written in Amos chapter 5 verse 4, “This is what the Lord says to the house of Israel: Seek me
20 and live.” You have to seek God, rather than your feelings and senses. You should not look on your
21 surroundings. It is written in Hebrews chapter 10 verse 38, “But my righteous one will live by faith.
22 And if he shrinks back, I will not be pleased with him.” Thus, Brothers and sisters! You should not
23 look at circumstances. Sometimes they might be good friend, or might be enemy. We have to look
24 not so much at the surroundings as up to God. It is written in Romans chapter 8 verse 31, “What,
25 then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us?” To believe is to look
26 at God only. Faith is to look at the Word of God, and to depend on God only. It is not looking at our
27 feelings and our surroundings, departing from God and his Word. These have nothing to do with
28 faith. Faith is to stand in the Word of God only. We have to believe in God the omniscient Creator.
29 This is the God who does our work, and takes our burden. If this God has promised so in the Bible,
30 then the only thing we should do is to stand on this Word. Even though the sky may collapse, and the
31 ground suddenly shrink away, this promise will not change by the smallest letter, or the least stroke
32 of a pen. Whether to live in this Word or die, whether to win or lose, whether to succeed or fail, all
33 we have to do is to put our destiny to God. It is written in the First John chapter 4 verse 4, “You,
34 dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than
35 the one who is in the world.” Thus we can live as more than conquerors, while depending on God.
36 So you have to believe and pray for this.

37 Fourthly, in order to enjoy the blessing God has prepared, there must be confession with our lips and

1 thanksgiving to God. Confession with our lips is very important. What should we confess? We have
2 to be able to call things that are not as though they were. Because it is God who gives life to the
3 death and calls things that are not as though they were, even though what you believe and pray is not
4 visible to you, not heard by your ear, and not grasped in your hand, you have to be able to confess
5 the blessings that are not as though they were. Didn't God create the heaven and earth through the
6 Word? God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. God said, "Let there be an expanse," and
7 there was an expanse. Jesus also forgave sin through his Word alone, "Your sins are forgiven!" To
8 the sick, "Take your mat and go home!" To the Sea of Galilee roaring high, "Quiet! Be still!" He
9 revealed the creative Almighty in his Word. Thus when we also boldly confess the faith of our mind
10 through our lips, the work of faith takes place through the word. Without the word, no matter how
11 much faith we have, it can never achieve anything at all. If the word is negative and pessimistic,
12 nothing happens. Our word must be positive, creative, and full of life.

13 It is written in Mark chapter 9 verse 23, "'If you can?'" said Jesus. 'Every thing is possible for him
14 who believes.'" In this way, we have to confess the word with an assured faith. The Bible says,
15 "whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be
16 loosed in heaven." How, then, can we bind and loose? We bind and loose in the word. Whatever we
17 bind with the positive, active, and creative word will be bound in heaven. Whatever we loose in
18 frustration, disappointment, and failure will be loosed in heaven. Our proclamation of faith is just
19 like an echo in the mountain. Only when we give a word can the echo respond to us. Only when we
20 bind here, will it be bound in heaven again. So in the name of the Lord, I am supplicating God for
21 blessings on all of you, through the positive, active, creative, and productive cross, to proclaim the
22 creative and successful word of the fivefold gospels and threefold blessings.

23 And at the same time, we also have to give thanksgiving to God. It is written in Psalm 50 verse 23,
24 "He who sacrifices thank offering honors me, and he prepares the way so that I may show him the
25 salvation of God." Giving thanks to God is the sweet-smelling offering at the end of all prayers. God
26 is pleased with this good scent. What a wonderful sweet-smelling flower it is! Thanksgiving is like a
27 flower garden that gives forth various sweet scents, and delights us. Thus God wants us to give the
28 sweet-smelling offering through thanksgiving in our prayer, faith, and good deeds. Furthermore,
29 thanksgiving is like fertilizer to the tree of faith. Even though we might have a weak faith, we should
30 give thanks in order to give fertilizer to the tree of faith, in order to give strength to that faith. If you
31 don't give thanks, faith becomes weak. No matter what you believe, if you reproach, complain, and
32 sigh, then, all of a sudden, that faith disappears like ice melting. But no matter how weak your faith
33 is, if you give thanks to God, all of a sudden, your faith become big and strong thanks to this
34 restorative of thanksgiving. Some people say, "I can't be positive. I cannot but be negative anyway."
35 No matter how often they go to church, if they meet the real situation, they easily become sensual,
36 emotional, and negative because of their surroundings. There is no other way that the negative mind
37 is able to stick to the positive except through thanksgiving.

1 It is written in Romans chapter 8 verse 28, "And we know that in all things God works for the good
2 of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." Believing this good end, we
3 have to give thanks to God. When the negative mind arises, we have to give thanks positively, and
4 then, the negative force is removed. Thanksgiving always makes the mind positive. Without
5 thanksgiving our mind can't become positive. Moreover, it is thanksgiving that is the biggest power
6 to drive out darkness. Doesn't the darkness disappear when you turn on the light in the dark night?
7 Thanksgiving is like lightening in the dark night. No matter how dark it is, if we sing a song at night,
8 and give thanks to God, then, our mind brightly lightens. Demons always bring us complaint and
9 discontent. But where there is thanksgiving and praise, demons run away. Our Lord is the God who
10 comes and is present among the praise of Israel. Coming to us, God takes thanksgiving and praise as
11 his throne. Resentment, complaint, and lamentation are invitation cards to the demon. But
12 thanksgiving and praise are the throne of God to come to us. Thus the power of thanksgiving is
13 strong enough to dispel the power of darkness. Moreover, thanksgiving is like the tree blooming
14 with the flower of hope. Humans live by hope; without hope, we cannot but get frustrated and
15 disappointed. Who brings hope? If we give thanks even in the dark place, this thanksgiving
16 blossoms into flower of hope. Thus, thanksgiving to God is very important in our lives.

17 Through Jesus, God has prepared tremendous grace and blessing for our sake. We should not miss
18 the blessing of grace due to our own mistake. We have to recognize through the Word the blessing
19 and grace God has given. And then, we also need to have the burning desire to receive the grace, and
20 dream the blueprint in the mind. Moreover we have to ardently pray, and firmly believe what we
21 pray, so that the desire and wish may be fulfilled. In the positive confession and thanksgiving, we
22 enter into the land of Canaan flowing with milk and honey, which God has prepared, receive and
23 enjoy the all blessing that God has promised from Genesis till Revelation. Truly the milk and honey
24 will flow in your life of faith, you will have life, and have it to the full. Moreover, you will good
25 health; everything will go well with you, and even as your soul prospers. No matter how abundant
26 the dinner is that the parent has prepared, if the child doesn't go and eat the food, it will starve to
27 death. It is the responsibility of the parent to prepare the table, but it is the child's responsibility to
28 take of the food. Even though God offers blessing through the precious blood of Christ shed and the
29 body torn on the cross, it is our responsibility that we receive and take this prepared grace. After we
30 recognize this truth, have the desire and dream to enjoy this grace, pray for the fulfillment in our life,
31 confess in our mouth, and give thanks, then, we will be able to take all the dishes on the table that
32 God has prepared, and to be full of life in ourselves.

33 Let's pray!

34 God the father! You have prepared for our sake things too great to be recognized by the human eye,
35 heard by the human ear, realized by the human mind. Through the Holy Spirit, through the word we
36 have realized this wonderful grace and blessing. But there are not so many of us who are able to take
37 the dish on this table, to obtain this big blessing. Oh our father! We pray and desire that we, while

1 staying on earth, may enjoy totally all the blessings you have fulfilled, so that we, as the followers of
2 Christ, may receive the blessing of Christ abundantly, become able to give to others, share with
3 others, and witness the gospel to the ends of the earth. Help us not to become the fool who wears old
4 rags, and just tramples the church. Help us to cast away the old nature with the curse and poverty,
5 and to put on the new man. Help us to live in the new man. I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

6 **Rev. Sun Hee Kwak. Date: 1998.03.29 Text: John 19:1-9 Title: Behold this man!**

7 Dear brothers and sisters! The true character of a person seems to be revealed more clearly in an
8 extreme situation; in a peaceful situation, truth often hides itself.

9 When everything goes well, and there are no problems, then, righteousness often conceals itself;
10 whether this is good or evil, a righteous person or a sinner, love or hate, distinctions are blurred. But
11 in an extreme situation, we can see the truth being clearly revealed.

12 During times of glory, praise, richness and honor, and undeserved success, we cannot recognize
13 which is righteousness or evil. At such a time, the false receive glory, and hypothesis also often
14 passes for the truth. But when misfortunes come, and we suffer poverty, illness, failure, humiliation,
15 loneliness, and many other sufferings, then all things false withdraw from us, and only the truth
16 clearly reveals itself to us. Especially when we, in spite of innocence, come to suffer extreme
17 suffering, our very being seems to be clearly revealed.

18 Dear brothers and sisters! Jesus is He who, as the Word become flesh, came to this world. While he
19 lived in this world, he was buried as it were. As Martin Luther says, He was the hidden word. He
20 was, as the hidden Word of God, buried. But, when he began to teach, his true character was
21 revealed. When Jesus performed his ministry, when he healed the sick, visited the downcast, and
22 took care of each person, true character of the Lord became more clearly revealed. However, it is
23 from the event of the cross that we can essentially see the Lord revealed as the Lord, and He is
24 revealed as the Son of God. In this sense, the teaching of Jesus without the cross, the miracles of
25 Jesus without considering the cross, are of no value at all. Nothing is important without the cross.
26 The points is, through the cross, all his teaching, his power and his authority come to acquire new
27 meaning, and are re-interpreted.

28 Examining today's passage with this in mind, the fact that Jesus stands before the court of Pilate
29 conveys an important significance. In the same vein, in 2 (1) Timothy chapter 6 verse 13, the Apostle
30 Paul says; "Christ Jesus, while testifying before Pontius Pilate, made a good confession." This very
31 occasion was the crucial moment. This scene clearly tells us that He was the very Son of God, tells
32 us who Jesus is, how we humans should conduct ourselves, what the children of God should do, and
33 how the disciples of Jesus should live their lives. Please read today's text with great care and
34 meditate deeply on it! Then you will clearly see your way forward. You will feel the mystery that
35 only the Lord and yourself know. Just as many scholars have described on this occasion, I also

1 would like to use the same term, the humanness of Jesus. Here the true human character of Jesus is
2 clearly revealed right in front of Pilate. His humanity becomes clear and apparent. Please quietly
3 think of the character of Jesus standing before Pilate.

4 This scene is often referred to as “the Pilate court” and the phrase has become a common saying.
5 The Pilate court! This is the unjust court that made the innocent the sinner, and sentenced Him to be
6 crucified. The court that makes the innocent the sinner is historically called “the Pilate court.” This
7 is the most representative symbol of an unjust court.

8 Meanwhile, Jesus, standing before Pilate, does not utter a single word. But beneath this scene is the
9 marvelous Word. There is a Word that we have to listen to again and again. Here is the specific Word
10 that is given to each one of you. Now we have to be able to listen to this Word.

11 Today, there is no way that Pilate can recognize Jesus. How can he recognize Jesus; he, Pilate, who
12 is drunk with this world alone, intoxicated with power, totally absorbed in himself? No matter how
13 he looks, there is no way that he can recognize Jesus. Thus today’s text says; “Behold, the man.
14 Look at this man.” He is the man who is not known at all. Who on earth is this man? Pilate has never
15 heard or seen anyone like this man. Facing with the only crucial encounter in history, Pilate is now
16 in agony.

17 If we think of this meeting from the theological view, this is the encounter between Pax and Shalom.
18 This is the time that Pax and Shalom meet. The term ‘Pax’ is the original Latin word for ‘peace’ in
19 English. Here Pax means the very quiet peace. It certainly means peace, but a peace accomplished
20 only by force. To the forceful man with power, everyone is quiet. No one dares open their mouth. No
21 one dares think a bad thought. Everything is quiet like the silence of the public cemetery. Is this
22 peace? Here is no demonstration, no strike and no declaration. No yelling. It is just quiet. This is just
23 like the quiet in an asylum, just like the quiet in a compulsory labor camp. This is the peace that
24 Rome sought, and it was Pilate who was at home in this peace. He was the representative of Rome
25 and this peace of Pax. He was ruling the Jewish nation and society with force. He lived among this
26 nation as the representative of force. The past had been quiet, and he still hoped for the same quiet as
27 before. He thought of it as peace.

28 Now Jesus stands before Pilate, stands before death, before the contradictory court. But Jesus stands
29 knowing the full consequence. Thus Jesus’ heart is calm. He is quietly meditating. Think of it! In his
30 face there is peace. In Him there is no burning desire, disorder, or confusion. He quietly stands with
31 the final consequence. No matter what they do, whether they spit on him, or put a crown of thorns on
32 him, whether they put a scarlet robe on him or strip him, whether they strike him on the head with a
33 reed or not, Jesus takes heed of nothing at all, and just stands in quiet and silence. Pilate was totally
34 unable to understand this. Look at this strange man! Behold, the man. Of course, Pilate cannot
35 understand this. What he especially cannot understand is Jesus’ serenity in the face of death. Pilate
36 considers death as the end. But Jesus speaks of eternal life after death. He looks upon the morning of

1 the resurrection. Since this is calmness before death, in Jesus there is no any dark shadow. This is the
2 character that the Lord has shown to us. There is no poor excuse. There is no struggle for life.
3 Without making excuse this way, manipulating that way, or without any change of attitude, He
4 stands in his serenity. Jesus standing before death, standing before the cross, isn't there great power
5 here? Pilate also knows of Jesus by hearsay. Why doesn't he know Jesus, who performed many
6 miracles? - about healing, about the healed, about the teaching of resurrection after death, and the
7 report of making the sea calm, and that so many people followed Him. Pilate knows much about
8 Jesus through accurate reports. But why doesn't His power appear at this crucial moment? Wouldn't
9 you think that those who put a crown of thorns on Jesus should get pricked by those thorns and
10 collapse before Him? Wouldn't it be natural to see those who spit on Jesus be struck dead by
11 lightening? But what I can't understand is; why is it so quiet? He is surely a man of power. But why
12 is He standing meekly without any power at this very moment? Moreover, Pilate knows well that
13 Jesus was brought here through jealousy and envy. He also knows that Jesus is innocent, and that
14 because of Jesus, the reputation that the priests, Pharisees, and scribes all enjoyed is being threatened,
15 as Jesus begins to win fame; so they caught Him and brought Him here. Pilate knows these facts
16 well. So Jesus is likely to say something like, "It is because of these men. It is because of their
17 jealousy and envy! This is such an obvious fact as to be judged as it were!" But He doesn't utter a
18 single word. We sometimes try to expound the truth, and only end up even further from it. Jesus
19 doesn't say a word. He accepts the unfair treatment. Don't you think surely Scripture is contradicting
20 itself? Why? Because He is surely innocent. It is written that his innocence is obvious to all. If so,
21 why is he struck? Why is a crown of thorns laid on him? He is beaten unfairly. Why is this innocent
22 man beaten? There is no answer at all. This is the encounter between Pax and Shalom.

23 For Jesus, the reason is this. In Luke chapter 9 verse 51 it is written that Jesus resolutely set out for
24 Jerusalem. This matter had already been determined. Therefore, there is no reason for excuses. From
25 the beginning to the end, Jesus just remained steadfast. In Matthew chapter 20 verse 28 it is written,
26 "Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for
27 many." It was to serve that He came to this world. He came as the sacrifice and ransom. Because this
28 is the beginning, the end also should be so; it doesn't matter how many times the world collapses
29 headlong.

30 Some of you also sometimes experience agony because of this. If you have once resolved to serve,
31 then, you should keep your resolve to the last point. If you decided to serve this person, just serve
32 him. Because now you think; 'Why do they want to be served?' 'Will they give me recognition, or
33 just ignore me?' Because of this trivial thing, your mind becomes disordered. Because Jesus came to
34 serve, he served. Because he came to die, he died so. He never minded what they did to him or how
35 the situation changed. Jesus Himself says, "The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.
36 Unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed, but if it dies, it
37 produces many seeds." Jesus does as he resolves and as he says. He follows the path that he teaches.

1 If there is nothing but words and no action, nothing but starting and no ending, then, there will be
2 nothing but the problem and no peace at all. Jesus is not concerned about anything at all now. For as
3 He started, so is he going to end.

4 Brothers and sisters! We should meditate on the deep meaning of the silence. Pilate knows well that
5 Jesus is innocent. The Scriptures today also continually says: "He is innocent. He is innocent." Then,
6 what should He say to Pilate who already knows His innocence, but cannot solve the problem? If
7 Pilate doesn't know, then he could be informed. But what word is necessary to him who does
8 nothing in spite of knowing? Dearly beloved! There are so many useless words. Everything is
9 known. Now the only thing necessary is determination. What trivial word do you need here? For this
10 reason, Jesus keeps silence before Pilate. If there is a Word, it is within. "Do as you know." In front
11 of Pilate, who, in spite of knowing, does nothing for so many reasons, now Jesus has no word at all.
12 Before Pilate who is just shaking with fear and mental conflict, Jesus has no word at all. Moreover,
13 Jesus has already committed his life to God. Just last night at Gethsemane He prayed thus; "Yet not
14 as I will, but as you will." At the very moment He says 'Amen' to the will of the Father, everything
15 ends as it were. After that time, it doesn't matter whether the situation goes this way or that way, no
16 matter who betrays, or who spits, or mocks. It doesn't matter because everything has already been
17 completed in the relationship between God and me. What a wonderful silence this is! This is real
18 silence. We sometimes see many declarations made by Christians, and by the churches, or arising
19 from certain circumstances. These declarations are published in newspapers. But what I think is this;
20 there is no need for a Christian to make declaration. There is no excuse for those who believe in God.
21 Why is a declaration necessary? Because He has already committed everything to God.

22 Another point is this, in those days, people used to beat innocent people to death, they used to beat
23 them and enjoy seeing them in agony, enjoy seeing them yell and resist. They just enjoyed it with
24 clapping their hands. This was a kind of cruel entertainment at that time. For their entertainment,
25 they made mockery of Jesus. They put a crown of thorns on Jesus' head, put a purple robe on him,
26 and a reed in his hand, and mocked him, saying "Hail, king of the Jews!" They also smote Him on
27 his cheek. They want to see how he reacts. But Jesus does not pay any attention to their attempts to
28 have fun at his expense. What word is necessary now? "Let's see how he responds in this case! Let's
29 have a look at how he react if we taunt him thus far!" With this in mind, they are mocking and
30 smiting him. It isn't necessary for Jesus to say a word. He does not say one word. The Scripture
31 clearly says that it was even Pilate who feared Jesus. There is a painting hanging in my room that
32 was painted by a famous Russian artist and sent to me from there. This painting, a close-up of the
33 very faces of Jesus and Pilate, captures the crucial moment when the two great men meet face to
34 face. Here Jesus is quiet. But Pilate is, in spite of wearing the regimental insignia and helmet,
35 shaking with fear before Him. The artist captures this crucial moment in his own way. Here, we
36 should also think of it. On the one hand, Jesus has spiritual power; On the other hand, Pilate also
37 seems to command in a loud voice with worldly power. But his face has already died. Where can we

1 find the face of the Christian?

2 Many of you must have read the book, *Silence*, which is written by Endo Shusaku, a Japanese, and a
3 famous Catholic, or might be considered as Christian, novelist. I cannot repeat the whole story of the
4 book. In brief, Sebastian Rodrigues, a Portuguese priest, came to Japan and did missionary work.
5 But at that time, Bodomie Ieyasu caught all the Christians and put them to death. Through this major
6 persecution, tens of thousands died. This book was based on an historical account of this persecution.
7 In the book, Inoue, a Nagasaki feudal lord, devised something called 'fumie.' Fumie means 'to
8 trample on a drawing.' This feudal lord devised such a strange system of fumie. This consisted of
9 just a picture on copperplate, roughly depicting Jesus' face. Completing this drawing on the plate,
10 and Inoue then laid the plate on the ground. It was nothing more than a brief drawing. It was just a
11 copy of a human face that signifies, "This is a drawing of Jesus." This feudal lord intended to save
12 those who passed by treading on the drawing, and to kill those who passed without treading on it.
13 Using this system, he put very many people to death. In one sense, this drawing is nothing. But
14 treading on this picture meant a betrayal of faith. When this system was first devised, it was intended
15 to save as many Christians as possible for this drawing was really nothing more than just a rough
16 sketch mimicking any human face. So anyone who passed by just treading on this drawing could be
17 saved. It was originally intended to save life. But even Inoue did not know that so many people
18 would choose death.

19 Now Father Rodrigues comes to stand before this drawing. If he tramples on it, then he will be saved.
20 Before the drawing he hesitates, whether to trample on it or not. At this moment, the voice of Jesus
21 reached the ear of Father Rodrigues. "Trample! Trample! It's okay to trample on me. Didn't I
22 originally come to be trampled on? Your heart must be in great pain to trample on me. Just like the
23 people who have been trampling on me, you must also be in pain. Even though I am trampled on,
24 your love that fills faint in sympathy is enough for me. Just trample on me!" After hearing these
25 voices, Rodrigues answers, "Oh, Lord! I am resenting you who always remain silent!" Jesus answers,
26 "I am not just keeping silent, in fact, I am also in agony with you." So many people were hanging on
27 the crosses placed on the seashore. When the tide comes in, they are going to be drowned. Seeing
28 the dying people, the father cries out, "Oh Lord how long will you remain silent? Why are you just
29 looking at this?" The Lord's voice is again heard, "I am not silent, but am with them in their
30 suffering."

31 Brothers and sisters! The silence of God, the silence of Jesus, the character of Jesus before Pilate,
32 look at all these carefully. Here is the love of God toward us. Here is the waiting for us. Here is the
33 forgiveness toward us. The Lord still says to each one of us personally, "I am with you in your pain
34 and suffering." Here is the mysterious history. Let us deeply meditate on the character of the Lord,
35 who, looking upon the morning of the resurrection, quietly remains silent. This is the way that the
36 Christian has to follow. Dearly beloved! Let's stop talking. Let's quietly choose the way of suffering
37 with the Lord. Because that is life. Let us pray!

2 A preacher has the responsibility to preach the Word in such a way that all of the believer are able to
3 understand and realize it well. However, one passage makes no trouble at all, but not so another one.
4 The passage we have read today, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God." is also a very
5 difficult one for the preacher. It is not because I don't understand it so well, but because I have been
6 struggling with this passage by knowing how difficult it is for me to preach the Word so that all of
7 you may be able to receive the Word as the voice of the living God. So for the whole week, I have
8 prayed and studied the passage, and now I am going to preach it because I am compelled to do it, but
9 frankly speaking, I am not sure of it. So I pray that the Holy Spirit will touch your heart and help
10 each one of you even through this poor sermon so that you may be able to understand the meaning
11 of the passage, and to listen to the voice of God for your sake today.

12 Human beings see something as they live in the world. It could be something material, or spiritual.
13 Businessmen see money. Artists can't turn their eyes away seeking the ultimate beauty. Politicians
14 gaze upon power and reputation. Those who fall in love see nothing but love. Thus, people see
15 something as they live the life. In this sense, it is not too much to say that people can be evaluated
16 according to what to see.

17 So what about Christians? Christians are alike. We also live the same social life as the non-believers
18 do? Surely there isn't any other way for us, even faithful Christians, to live without doing what non-
19 believers do in this world? Thus each of us should live the life to seek the goal that we have set. You
20 all know the story of Jacob in the Old Testament? For twenty years, Jacob lived off his wife's family.
21 But he always had a dream in his heart, "How can I become independent of my uncle, so that I may
22 live on my own?" This was his never-failing dream. Do you know what Jacob see for twenty years?
23 He continually looked upon every speckled or spotted sheep and goat, or dark-colored cow, avoiding
24 the white ones because the covenant made with his uncle was that whatever was spotted belonged to
25 him, it would become his property. We know that later Jacob became independent through all the
26 wealth he acquired from his uncle. And God didn't punish Jacob on this attitude.

27 So it is the same for Christians. I don't think God demands us to leave their works undone, and just
28 attend church, Bible study group, or pray to God, looking up to heaven only. Christians also have to
29 give their best for their lives here, looking at the purpose they have set. We have to give our best in
30 whatever situation we are placed, as a student, a businessman, a public officer, or a housewife.
31 Whatever it is, we have to do our best in it. However, there is one thing God demands us to keep in
32 mind: whatever we seek in our lives, it should not exceed our love for God. So in this sense, we are
33 no different from the worldly men; we have to live a similar life to the non-believers.

34 However, there has to be one thing different for us Christians in comparison to worldly men. That is
35 the eye to see God. I am not talking about the physical, or mental eyes. This is about the eyes of the
36 heart. In the born-again-event, the Holy Spirit opens our spiritual eyes, and helps us to confess Jesus

1 as our savior. It is the Holy Spirit who makes us to be born again. Thus the Lord says, "I tell you the
2 truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again." This passage means: "Anyone
3 can see the kingdom of God if he is born again." So what kind of eyes is this passage referring to?
4 It's about the spiritual eyes and the eyes of the heart. The eyes of the heart open. To see the kingdom
5 of God means to see Jesus, and to see Jesus means to see God. We become one who sees God!
6 Brothers and sisters! Do you have these eyes? I don't hear any answer right away. Amen? Don't you
7 come to this place because you see God? What do you see now in this worship? You are not looking
8 at me. You are worshipping here because you see the invisible God. Thus it is clear that we have the
9 eyes to see God.

10 Doesn't this Word we have read today also speak about it? "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they
11 will see God." It means to see God with the heart. The Lord says, "it is blessed and joyful to see God
12 with the eyes of the heart." We have these eyes of the heart. Jesus Christ proclaimed this Word to his
13 disciples, and it is also for us. It is Matthew chapter 13 verse 16, "Blessed are your eyes because
14 they see, and your ears because they hear." What does it mean by the eyes to see? It means the eyes
15 of the heart.

16 The terms 'to see with the eyes of the heart' seems to need a little bit more explanation. You may
17 know about this, but this term is, in fact, very difficult to understand. In some sense, I wonder if I am
18 talking about what I don't know. It is difficult to explain too. Thus "to see God" needs the more
19 additional explanation. This term 'to see' is used when we describe the profound spiritual world in
20 which we recognize, know and experience God who is holy and spirit. God is Holy. God is Spirit.
21 God is transcendental being whom we cannot easily access and comprehend with our physical eyes.
22 In order to describe the recognition and experience of this transcendental being in human words, we
23 use the term, "to see God".

24 In the Bible, we have another term used to convey a meaning similar to 'to see God.' It is 'to know
25 God'. Thus both terms, 'to see God' and 'to know God' are often used in almost the same sense. We
26 have one example in Ephesians chapter 1 verse 17 to 19. Let's turn to this passage, page 311 of New
27 Testament. This is a difficult passage. We are going to read it together. I hope the Holy Spirit will
28 enlighten us.

29 "I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom
30 and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened
31 in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the
32 saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty
33 strength."

34 The Apostle Paul is in a prison in Rome right now. This is what Paul prays. Morning and night
35 falling on his knees on the cold stone floor of the prison, and with tears in his eyes, Paul earnestly
36 prays to God for his beloved Ephesian church. If we take a good look at these verses, we can find an

1 amazing Word in them. The Ephesians are the faithful Christians who already believe in Jesus Christ.
2 They already have the eye to see God; they are people who behold God. However, what is the
3 apostle Paul praying for here? He is praying, "Oh God! Give the Holy Spirit of wisdom and
4 revelation to the Ephesian believers, so as to open the eyes of their heart, and to know God better.
5 May they know Jesus Christ who has given salvation to us! May they know better the Holy Spirit
6 who gives us great power!"

7 Here the interesting thing is this. For him, which is normal prayer for seeing God or for knowing
8 God? Isn't it normal to pray for enlightenment of the eyes so as to see God? Nevertheless, Paul is
9 praying for 'knowing God better', instead of 'seeing God'. What is it meant by this? It means, in the
10 eyes of the heart, there is no difference at all between 'to see God' and 'to know God.' Thus, you
11 don't need to be puzzled by the phrase, 'to see God.' When we recognize, and experience God deep
12 in our heart, then, this means to see God. And if we fully see God in the eyes of the heart, then, it
13 means we know God. In order to express the sense of 'knowing God'; Paul uses the Greek word,
14 '*epignosei*', which is a very difficult term. In some sense, this is a very profound term; it means 'to
15 have full knowledge of God', so that there will be no empty space in one's mind at all. Thus you will
16 see that, in the fullness of the knowledge of God, there is no difference between 'to see God' and 'to
17 know God.'

18 So, the more we get to know God, the brighter the eyes of our heart become enlightened, and the
19 more closely and clearly we can see God. The less and less we know God, the dimmer and smaller
20 God becomes to us. Those who have deeply perceived the Word of the Bible, and have the full Word
21 of God in their heart, already have the full spiritual knowledge to know God. It is true that those
22 believers see God in a larger and closer image in comparison to those who do not know God well.
23 Thus to know and to see something are bound up in each other. For this reason, Paul prayed that the
24 Ephesian church that already knew Jesus may know God more and more, and may see God better
25 and better. Dear brothers and sisters, how earnestly should we pray to God for this everyday? How
26 eagerly do we need to pray for this?

27 By the way, there is one more thing we need to keep in mind. If we want to see God, it isn't enough
28 to only know God. We can find proof of this in the Word of Jesus Christ. If we want to see God,
29 there is another requirement: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God." Jesus says the
30 heart should be pure. What is meant by 'the pure in heart'? There are two meanings here. First, it
31 means, as the term says, 'to make clean the heart'. The eyes in our body blink 25,000 times daily, so
32 that tears flow over the eyes to continually clean the cornea and eyes, and to wash any tiny specks of
33 dust away. In this way we can see clearly what is before us, read, and look at other people. So, what
34 does it mean to have a pure heart? It means to wash and make clean the heart so as to make it pure
35 just as we make our eyes clean. Don't you know this from your own experiences - the fact that sin
36 makes our heart dirty? When you hate someone, what happens to your heart? It becomes dull, and
37 your eyes to see God become dim. If you become worse, full of hate toward somebody, your mind

1 becomes changed. When you do not forgive others and are inflamed with hatred in your heart, the
2 eyes of your heart become totally dark, like those of a blind person. Then, whom can you see? You
3 can't see God anymore. What about when you have lust in your heart, when you have a carnal
4 thought toward a lovely woman walking by? What happens to your heart? Your heart has already
5 become dirty. You can't see God anymore. No matter how deeply you know God, you can never see
6 God with this dirty heart. It is just as when, no matter how healthy your eyes, you can see nothing
7 with dirty in your eyes. What happens when you tell a lie? You can't see God who is standing just
8 beside you. It is because your eyes have already become dirty.

9 Francois Mauriac (1885-1970) is the famous author who won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1952.
10 He used to struggle with sexual desire that was like a viper swirling up in his heart. Someone may be
11 born free of this desire; others may be born bound by it. Maybe Mauriac was the latter case.
12 However, with his literary talent, he succeeded in sublimating this inner struggle into wonderful
13 literary work. On Matthew chapter 5 verse 8 we have read today he says this; 'when your heart
14 becomes dirty and dark, it takes you far away from God'. Isn't it true? In effect he is saying, 'Just as
15 in the physical world there is a rule that we have to keep, so in the spiritual world as well. That is, if
16 we want to go further and acquire the love of God, which is higher than any other in the world, then
17 the most essential thing is to have a clean and pure heart.' In other words, only when the heart is
18 pure and clean, may we step before God, and see God of love. The dirtier the heart, the further away
19 God is. Mauriac clearly speaks this truth from his own experience. So what must we do? We have to
20 keep our heart pure. We must admit no sin.

21 The second meaning of 'the pure in heart' is not to be divided in heart. In other words, it is the pure
22 in heart that is not 'double-hearted' and not hypocritical. In the next chapter of Matthew chapter 6
23 verse 24, Jesus says, "No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other,
24 or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. Likewise we cannot serve both God and
25 Money." By the way, do you know what Jesus says before this word in verses 22 and 23? He says,
26 "If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are bad, your whole
27 body will be full of darkness." What does this mean? It means, if the heart is divided, then, God
28 cannot be seen. If you once give your heart to God in the church, once serve God, and out of the
29 church, again turn to and serve money, then, the heart is divided. If you seek secular things with the
30 eyes with which you should seek God undividedly, then, you cannot see God with this divided mind.
31 This is because the heart is unclean. Because you hold two thoughts at the same time, the heart is
32 unclean in the eyes of God. Do you really want to always live a life with the sight to God before you
33 no matter when or how often you open or close your eyes? Then, the heart must be clean. We have to
34 remain single-minded.

35 Today, I hope the Holy Spirit to ask the spirit of each of you, brothers and sisters, "Do you have the
36 holy passion and desire to see God? Do you really want to see God, and know God better and better?
37 Do you really want to see and know God better?" If we have these desires, then we must get rid of

1 whatever makes our heart dirty. We have to banish things that divide our heart. Only then, can we
2 become people who enjoy seeing God. We all know Kierkegaard, the Christian philosopher. As far
3 as I know, he remained single all his life, and often seemed to be tempted by prostitutes. He once fell
4 into a great agony because of a beguiling prostitute. Didn't he also know quite well that if he once
5 become involved there, everything would become difficult? After so many struggles with this lust,
6 he finally wrote these words in his diary, "The pure clean heart only comes from solely seeking one
7 goal. Only when I solely devote all myself to the holy purpose, then I feel my heart become clean."
8 This means that when we have a heart burning with the holy desire to go near the holy God and to
9 see Him only, then, there is no chance at all that our heart become dirty. These two things have a
10 synergistic relationship. When I clean my heart, then I can see God. And when my heart burns with
11 the desire to see God, then, my heart becomes clean. Thus the conclusion is simple: 'the pure in
12 heart can see God'. In James chapter 4 verse 8, James says, "Come near to God!" This means,
13 "Come close to God and see Him." In order to do so, he says, there have to be the following
14 conditions: "Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your heart, you double-minded." This is the
15 important thing that we have to keep in mind when we want to see God.

16 Jesus says that "Blessed are those who keep the hearts pure and see God." "Blessed are the pure in
17 heart, for they will see God." In other words, "Really happy are those who see God because of their
18 pure heart." Who is happier than those who live in seeing God? We all should become such a person.
19 Let's think about those people who always see God whether their eyes are closed or open, whose
20 heart are fully filled with God. Is there anyone who is happier than this person in this world? My
21 heart is full of YHWH God, the creator of the heaven and the earth. The almighty God, who makes
22 the dead alive, who calls things that are not as though they were, always before me. Let's think of
23 ourselves as those who live day by day with such consciousness of the presence of God. Will there
24 be anything that scares us? Who can terrify one who sees God? How would such a person be
25 dissatisfied? The God who is all of all things fills the eyes of that person. Will there be any
26 discontent? In God there is neither dismay nor despair. Who can force this person to be in despair
27 when he/she lives in seeing God? Therefore, the Lord says "Blessed are those who see God" I wish
28 we all could live such a life.

29 Beloved brothers and sisters! This is not an abstract saying. I have been experiencing so many fore
30 parents – even though they could not read A and had not possessed many worldly things, because
31 they saw the living God in the eyes of the heart, they always lived a life full of joy, they were always
32 satisfied, thanked to God, laughed, and praised to God everyday. This is not an abstract saying.

33 However, there is one thing to keep in mind when we say to see and to know God. That is, we can't
34 see God completely. It is not possible to know God completely. Since God is infinitely huge, how
35 can we know all the aspects of God at once? God possesses the attributes of holiness, love,
36 sovereignty, omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent, etc. Furthermore, God is spirit whose
37 attribute is not changeable but the same yesterday, today, and forever. We cannot see such

1 transcendental attributes of God at once. As Moses prayed to God, "Oh Lord, let me behold you,
2 show me your glory," God who loves Moses said, "OK, I will answer your request. But you will not
3 be able to see my face, for no one may see me and live. You shall see my back instead." Answering
4 Moses' prayer, God covered Moses with His hand until He had passed by, and momentarily removed
5 His hand, so that Moses saw God's back just in a glance.

6 We are alike. When we talk about knowing and seeing God, it means we see His back only. It means
7 to experience just one of so many attributes of God. In other words, according to our circumstances,
8 or the condition in which we happen to be, we come to know, see, and experience just some part of
9 God that is meaningful to us.

10 For example, let's look at Abraham. When he was 75 years old, he received the amazing promise
11 from God: "I will give you a son, and a whole people of a whole nation will be blessed through your
12 son whom I will give you." In relation to his advanced age, it would have been only natural that
13 Abraham should have the son just after this promise. But God did not keep His promise for another
14 25 years. Abraham became older, and his wife also became older. Hasn't it always been impossible,
15 right through the ages, for the elderly to have a baby? Even though God promised to give the son,
16 He did nothing, as time passed and passed, and Abraham and Sarah got older and older. In this
17 situation, what kind of God did Abraham look up to? Romans chapter 4 verse 21 speaks of the God
18 who has power to do what he has promised. This was the God whom Abraham continually looked
19 upon. In other words, he clung to this God who is faithful and almighty. "God almighty has
20 promised. The faithful God never tells a lie. So he will surely give me the son. He is the almighty
21 God who, even though my body is as good as dead, will surely bear my offspring through me." By
22 keeping this faith in mind, he saw God. Abraham beheld this God, faithful and almighty, for 25 years,
23 received his son Isaac at last, and became the father of the Messiah who saved the whole nation.

24 Let's look at another example: David. What a wretched existence he had in his political flight from
25 Saul's pursuit! Wandering over mountain and hill with his 600 followers, David had to support them
26 all. He had to manage this problem in the face of poverty. In this situation, what kind of God was
27 David looking upon? It was the God who, like a shepherd, made him lie down in green pastures, and
28 led him beside quiet waters. Because of his circumstance, David looked upon this God. So how did
29 David praise Him? "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want." And again, what kind of God
30 did David look up to, after he took his servant's wife, when he was agonizing in the sting of
31 conscience, drenching his bed with his tears day and night? It was the forgiving God who is pleased
32 with the broken and contrite heart. He looked upon this God only.

33 Do you know which God the great missionary Livingstone gazed upon, when he entered the dark
34 African continent which had never been touched by any European, sacrificed his whole life, and
35 died in order to build the path of the gospel there? "To the very end of the age, I will be with you
36 always". God Immanuel, this was the God whom Livingstone constantly looked upon all through his

1 life inside the frightening jungle. Thanks to this he could succeed.

2 As for me, do you know which God I always gaze upon day by day? God almighty, the God who
3 heals us, who is wisdom! I want to look upto all of God. However, I was often afflicted by the
4 mental burden and suffering for the past few years. When I stand here and look at you, I become
5 afraid. Does this make sense to you? If I make a mistake, and if I am at fault, then, your spirit
6 becomes sick. You go the wrong way. This church belongs to God. So whenever I look at you and
7 become afraid and feel the burden of my weakness, it is the merciful God whom I look up to at such
8 a time. Whenever I pray to God and praise Him, the God who is present before my eyes is the God
9 of mercy and compassion. At this time, my eyes are full of this compassionate God who says 'It's
10 OK' to my mistake, who makes up for my weakness with his compassion, who does not pay back
11 punishment for sin, evil for evil, who is patient with his abundant mercy toward me. Because of my
12 weakness, this is the God who is seen by me.

13 Which God do you need? Which God should you look up to? Which God should you know and gaze
14 upon everyday? Ask yourself! Do you see this God? Is this God seen by you as Abraham did? Do
15 you see this God, and live a joyful life day by day as David and Livingston did? Do you live a life
16 closely related to and dependent upon God like me? If you do, then, you win. If you do, then you
17 will succeed.

18 Knowing about God becomes a great consolation for us. Spurgeon, the great preacher, once declared
19 this impressive saying. I will read it to you, "In meditating on Jesus Christ is the abundant cure to
20 heal every wound. In meditating on God the Father is the wonderful remedy to remove all suffering
21 and sorrow. In the Holy Spirit's power to influence is the wonderful painkiller to remove all pain. Do
22 you want to get rid of all sorrow? Do you want to forget all anxiety? Then, immerse yourself in the
23 deep holy sea in order to see our Lord. Try to concentrate deeply on the greatness of God. Then, you
24 will become renewed and strengthened just like a man coming out of a deep rest. I don't know
25 anything else that gives us more consolation and strength than this, to eagerly meditate on our God. I
26 don't know anything else that so powerfully calms the turbulent waves of sorrow and the torrential
27 wind of trial." This is very lovely confession. In brief, it means, if you come before God, as you
28 desire to know God, and know him better, then, you are able to wash away all the pain and sickness
29 in your heart.

30 What is a life that is healthy in faith? It is to have a continual passion to see and know the holy God
31 more and more. Why are we created? In order to know God! Why are we living here? In order to
32 know the holy God! What is salvation? It is to know God. If you want to make your only life worth
33 living, in other words, a valuable life worth taking care of with great effort, then, there should be a
34 goal equal to this effort. What is this goal? It is to know God. The reason I have to succeed in this
35 world also comes from knowing God. In this world, there is no higher, more noble and captivating
36 goal than to know God better and to see God more closely.

1 Dear brothers and sisters! Let us humbly ponder on ourselves. Why do I become miserable? Isn't it
2 because you don't see God? Why do we lose strength and become downcast? It is because you don't
3 see God almighty. Let's find out the reason for this. It is probably because our hearts aren't pure.
4 Something is making the heart dirty. Probably the heart is divided. Thus no matter which God is seen,
5 He is dim. What is the point to see God unclearly? It is meaningless. How can this dim sight give me
6 strength and encouragement? How can this meaningless sight help me hold onto hope? What
7 meaning can this dim sight of God convey to us? We have to find out the reason for this dimness.
8 Stop deploring 'why is my home like this' anymore. You have to find the reason. Find the reason
9 why your marriage relationship is struggling. Find the reason why your children are in trouble. If we
10 live the life to clearly see God, these things won't happen. When the holy and merciful God who is
11 present among the glory fully fills our heart, can the problems that the worldly people suffer
12 influence us alike?

13 Thus dear brothers and sisters! It is really happy are those who are pure in heart and see God. Do not
14 see the world, or the world deceive you. Do not see people, or people will disappoint you. We have
15 to see God only. That is the way to live victoriously and positively. That is the key that we can show
16 to the world.

17 At the time when sailing ships sailed the ocean, in order to train the young men to become seamen,
18 they were sent to climb up to the top of the mast to furl a sail or to keep watch. If the ship rolls up
19 and down, these novices feel that all the sea seems to rush up to them, and all the water seems to
20 devour them. Thus they scream and cry out. Whenever they do so, the skilled seamen shout up to
21 them. "Hey! Don't look down at the sea. Don't look at the water. Look up at the sky. Why do you
22 look down? Look up at the sky!" Isn't it true? No matter how the ship rolls and sways, if we look up
23 at the sky, there is nothing we are afraid of. But looking downward at the water and the ship, we
24 begin to lose our mind. Those who fix their eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, and
25 look up to God day by day, never despair, whether the world shakes or not. Amen. The problem is
26 whether God is seen or not, and if seen, whether seen in a small view or larger view, whether seen
27 clearly or dimly. The Word of our Jesus doesn't deceive us. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they
28 will see God." Those who are pure in heart and live by seeing God are really happy people. How can
29 the world dare to bear these people? Who can defeat these people? How can these people become
30 downcast, despondent, or discontent? Those who live in seeing God moment by moment become the
31 victors whom the world cannot defeat. I hope all of us to become these people and to have this grace.

2 At the beginning of the Second World War, the English people were seized with great anxiety and
3 fear about their uncertain future. At this time, the English government and Prime Minister Churchill
4 asked every English church to ring the church bell at the same time on the very date of the beginning
5 of the war. What bell was this? For whom did the bell toll? Whenever I hear this saying, one thing
6 comes to mind. A brother once came to me and asked, "Reverend. Do you know how to say 'For
7 whom the bell tolls?' in Kyung-Sang province dialect?" I said, "I am not from Kyung-Sang province,
8 so I don't know." He answered, "Why ya bell cry?" (Laughter) The bell was named the bell of hope
9 to plant hope in England especially during the war. At the same time, the English government
10 requested the honorable Archbishop William Temple to preach over the radio to the entire nation.
11 Archbishop Temple started his historic sermon in this way, "All people of the British Empire! After a
12 while, all bells in this country shall toll. As you listen to the sound of the bell, let us all go to church,
13 and worship God. Let us look up to God almighty who is the author of history. It is time to be led by
14 the Lord." Some maybe criticize this sermon as lacking any real counterplan, as very religious, just a
15 normal, and even stereotyped sermon. But I think that no better real counterplan could be proposed
16 in this situation. If we believe that all the suffering in history is just allowed by the providence of
17 God, it is surely impossible to escape from suffering without the guidance of God.

18 Brothers and sisters beloved! We, as a whole nation, are now going through a very hard time in our
19 history. Even though a new president has been elected, this can't offer us any wonderful optimism
20 that the hard suffering we are going through will end soon. Some of our neighbors have already
21 started to experience this suffering in every aspect of their lives. They are going through the
22 suffering of being fired from their job, the pain of a broken dream, and the shattering of their dear
23 homes. But because of this suffering, isn't it time for us to earnestly need the guidance of God? Then,
24 the question is, how can we be led by God? How can we really experience the guidance of the Lord?

25 In order to find an answer to this question, I want to share a story of the people who lived in the
26 eastern part of Israel 2,000 years ago and experienced the special guidance of God, the remarkable
27 guidance of the Lord. It is the story about the eastern Magi, also called the Wise Men. These wise
28 Magi could be led by the special guidance of God. How could they receive this guidance? While
29 meditating on today's text, we have to put this question to the Lord; what should I do in order to be
30 led by the guidance of the Lord in my real life?

31 The first answer is; we must look upon the Lord's vision. We should see the vision of our Lord in
32 this age. Brothers and sisters! Let's suppose, I take one of you by the arm and ask you a question,
33 "Brother, have you experienced the guidance of God recently in your life? Do you truly experience
34 the guidance of God in your real life?" I wonder; maybe, some of us will be unable to answer this
35 question. Why is this? In fact, the guidance of the Lord is the natural condition that the normal
36 Christian deserves. The Scriptures surely say that those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of

1 God. Notwithstanding, what is the reason that the Christians nowadays do not experience the
2 guidance of God in their real lives? I think, one of the reasons is that we are so accustomed to the
3 meaningless daily routine. We just live in this way. Just live and die. That's all. There is no real
4 concrete prayer that seeks to break through the difficulty of this life. Why not? In plain words, it's
5 because there is no hope. It's because there is no dream. If a new dream that captivates my heart
6 comes to me, then I shall kneel down before God. "Oh! My Lord, Help me! Lead me!" Only Then
7 we will pour out our desire for the guidance of God.

8 Brothers and sisters beloved! Do you know how the journey of the eastern magi full of the adventure
9 started from the Eastern, the wonderful seismic center toward Jerusalem and Bethlehem? Quite
10 simply, it was because they experienced a vision from heaven. They saw the star of God. As soon as
11 they saw this star, they began to be changed. This star became the new goal in their lives. They set
12 forth toward this new life.

13 In 1988, when the Summer Olympics took place at Seoul, I was staying in the United States. How
14 wonderful it would have been if the news about Korean players had been broadcasted! I waited for
15 news about Korean players again and again, but they broadcast American players only, because
16 America was where I was staying. What a pity that was! In broadcasting the Olympic Games, almost
17 all of American TV continually focused on one heroic star. Maybe you remember this as well. You
18 maybe still remember a black athlete woman, Florence Griffith-Joyner, who rose to become the
19 international heroine of the 1988 Olympics, winning three gold medal and one silver by herself. She
20 ran with the slender figure in the colorful suit. During a broadcast interview with her, she showed
21 her long painted fingernails and pretty smile. I can't forget her even now. Joyner's life story was
22 continually heard through the broadcasts. She was born one of eleven children in one of the poor
23 slums in southern Los Angeles. She survived by means of a government grant. She had no dream. In
24 despair, she always kept away from friends and lived the life of a girl suffering from nervous
25 depression. One day, one event changed her whole life. A black hero visited the primary school she
26 attended. He was Sugar Ray, a famous boxing champion. Do you remember him, Sugar Ray? All the
27 pupils start to scream and cry out with joy. Looking around carefully, Sugar Ray came to notice an
28 uninterested girl, sitting in the corner alone, not showing any interest and just looking down at the
29 ground. After finishing his interview and speech, Sugar Ray, the famous boxing champion, came up
30 to this girl. "Are you feeling sick?" "No, I just don't like this. I just dislike it all. I dislike home, and
31 school, I dislike everything." Sugar Ray hugged this girl and asked, "What's your name?" "My name
32 is Flor, Florence." "You have one thing you like, don't you? What is it?" Suddenly her eyes twinkled
33 and she said, "I like running." "Do you like it? Then, you can be famous like me. You can be a
34 famous international athlete. Those who have a dream are rich. If you have the dream, you can be a
35 famous international athlete. I will pray for you to be so." He encouraged her. One word that Sugar
36 Ray said on that day hung a star upon the sky of her life. She saw the star. From that day on, she
37 changed. She started to run. And at last, she rose to become the international star of the 1988

1 Olympics, and is still working now as one of the most influential women in the United States.

2 Brothers and sisters beloved! If there is one thing that is most necessary for our nation at this
 3 moment in our history, it is to see a star in the sky. It is to see a vision. This is more important than
 4 the obvious economic theory of how to recover the economy. Do we have a star that we can see in
 5 the dark sky? Brothers and sisters beloved! Our God is the Lord who hangs a star in the sky for our
 6 sake. Do you believe this? In the Bible, the Lord continually repeats his promise, "On the last day, I
 7 will pour out my Spirit over my servants. Then, young man will see visions, old man will dream
 8 dreams." God gives us a dream! This is our God who gives us vision, who is pleased by his children
 9 to see the bright vision and dream and run their paths in life! Lift up your eyes. When we see the star
 10 of hope and the vision that God has hung high in the dark sky, then we can stand up again. If we
 11 want to be led by God, we have to look upon this vision first. At the very moment we see this vision,
 12 we know, "My life isn't over. The Lord still holds his expectation of my life! The ultimate plan in
 13 my life still remains that I have to live and do my best." At the moment we see the dream of God,
 14 Brothers and sisters, isn't the frustration too early? I want you to believe the fact that we can still
 15 expect the guidance and deliverance of God. Then, how can we experience this guidance of God?

16 The second important thing is, we have to learn how to rely on the Word of the Lord. We have to
 17 learn how to depend upon the Word of God. How do you think the eastern Magi came to know that
 18 the star that God showed them in the sky was the very star of the Messiah? We need to know the
 19 identity of these Magi. The Eastern Magi!² What kind of doctor is this? A doctor of chemistry, or
 20 what? Doctors are those who study outside and die.³ The word 'Pak-Sa' is written as 'Magi' in the
 21 English Bible. Do you know which English word is closest to 'Magi'? It is 'magic' to play magic.
 22 The Magi were the magicians. According to your assumptions, maybe, you would consider them to
 23 be lower class people. But we need to pay attention to the fact that the ancient magicians received
 24 the same esteem as the modern doctor. Do you know the person who was exiled to a distant alien
 25 nation and rose to fame after once interpreting a dream? Who was that? It was Joseph. And another?
 26 Come on! Let's have a look at Daniel! It's Daniel chapter 2. Do you know who the main hero of the
 27 book of Daniel is? It goes without saying it is Daniel. Let's turn to Daniel chapter 2. Some of you
 28 seem have difficulty in finding Daniel chapter 2; you seem to be giving up finding the page. Look at
 29 the last two verses of chapter 2. It's Daniel chapter 2 verse 48 and 49. Let's read them together.
 30 "Then the king placed Daniel in a high position and lavished many gifts on him. He made him ruler
 31 over the entire province of Babylon and placed him in charge of all its wise men." Daniel interpreted
 32 the king's dream. At that time, it would have been normal for the matter to just end in receiving
 33 presents. But which position was granted to him? He became the prime minister. The king made him
 34 ruler over the entire province, the premier who supervised all, above the provincial governor.

² The word 'Magi' in Korean, Pak-Sa, has the same enunciation as Doctor in Korean.

³ This is a joke. The Korean word, Pak-Sa, which means 'doctor,' consists of two enunciations, Pak to mean outside, and Sa to mean death in Korean.

1 Moreover, do you know where Daniel was placed further? If we look at the last part of verse 48, we
2 read that he was placed in charge of all Babylon's wise men. In Babylon there were already so many
3 wise men. They were the Magi who dealt with astrology. Daniel was placed over them. When we
4 look at the position that was granted to them, we know that these astrologers were not so much mere
5 magicians as the social elite of this age. They received reverence. And high social statues were
6 granted to them. What position was granted to Daniel as one of them? He became the captain over
7 them. He interpreted the king's dream that no one could solve. People around him would ask him,
8 "How could you interpret it?" Daniel was sure to answer like this, "God helped me! I have a
9 wonderful book which grants me this amazing wisdom." Daniel was sure to introduce this important
10 book to the people around him. What is this book? It's the Bible.

11 Through Daniel, the Bible began to work in alien Babylon. The Word of God started to spread far
12 and wide. As the people in Babylon or Persia came to know the Bible, it followed naturally that
13 these Magi came to pay attention to an important prophecy in the Bible. It is written in Numbers
14 chapter 24 verse 17, "A star will come out of Jacob." They would know that the Messiah would
15 come out of Israel, the Messiah who would certainly be the hope of the world, and that a star would
16 appear some day to announce His birth. They would certainly know this Word. After hearing from
17 Daniel, these eastern magi started to pay attention to the movement of the heavenly bodies. And at
18 last, one day, a star did appear. It was an unusual star. We don't need to consider this star as some
19 transformation of a normal star. It was clearly the advent of a supernatural star, the result of a
20 miracle of God. As soon as they saw this star, like a comet appearing in the sky and shining brightly,
21 the Magi intuitively realized that the Messiah had come. It was the Messiah. And they set forth
22 forwards it. This was the wonderful moment in which their life changed. It was the moment when
23 the new journey to change their life started.

24 By the way, there is one thing that almost all Christians misunderstand. This mistake arises mainly
25 from Christmas carols or hymns. One of the hymns we sing tells that the eastern Magi followed the
26 star. Thus, we may misunderstand that, after appearing over the Magi, this star continually led their
27 journey, over the desert, across the rivers, and past field and mountain, at last led them to Jerusalem.
28 But it was never like that. If we look at the text of today carefully, then, we find the fact that the star
29 certainly appeared. But after that, the star probably disappeared. Through this star appearing over
30 them, they learnt only that the Messiah had come and was born in Israel. And then, they looked for
31 the way to the capital of Israel, Jerusalem. They came to Jerusalem, not with the sight of the star
32 over them, but with the belief in the Word of God inside their heart. Holding onto the Word of God
33 only, they looked for the way to the land of Palestine where the Actor of this Word of God should be.
34 They arrived in Jerusalem, and asked people, "Where is the one who has been born king of the
35 Jews? Not just a king for the Jews, but the Messiah who is to become the hope for all mankind?"
36 Through the help of chief priests and teachers of the law, they were told He was to be born in
37 Bethlehem. Thus the Magi turned their way to Bethlehem. It is not a far distance. In distance it is

1 similar to that here BoonDang to Suwon. On their way from BoonDang to Suwon, the Mage saw the
2 star that appeared again over them. This is when the star appeared. Let's turn to Matthew chapter 2
3 verse 9. Let's read it together. "After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star
4 they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was."
5 Here the tense of "they had seen in the east" is the past. They saw again the star that they had seen in
6 the east, the star that appeared to tell the birth of the Messiah, the star that they had seen at their
7 homeland before. On their way from Jerusalem to Bethlehem, they are concerned about "where can
8 we find Him?" To them the star suddenly appeared again. What a surprise it was! So let's read the
9 next verse 10. "When they saw the star, they were overjoyed." If they were continually led by the
10 star, there would be no reason to be surprised here. But the star that they had seen in the east
11 suddenly reappeared in the sky over the Bethlehem, and began to shine brightly over them. How
12 such a surprise and joy it was! They started to be surprised. Here is one thing we need to notice; that
13 it was not the star that continually led them on their way from their homeland to Palestine, it was the
14 Word. Looking upon the Word, they went on their way; holding the Word, they traveled along.

15 Brothers and sisters! I hope that you may believe that it is the Word of God that is one of the
16 important means to rely on in order to be led by God. A miracle doesn't always happen. This is
17 called as miracle because it happens only sometimes. If it always happens, then, it isn't a miracle
18 anymore. What are you going to do if there is no miracle? In our lives, in the lives of Christians, the
19 miracle may happen sometimes. Then, our eyes open all of a sudden, the way of life lightens and we
20 may experience the power of God. But this doesn't always happen. What are you going to rely on in
21 the dark night when the miracle of God doesn't happen anymore, when your life wanders upon the
22 desolate ground of the dark night? What are you going to rely on in this dark night without a
23 miracle? We have one thing we can rely on even in this time. That is the Word of God. Here is the
24 importance of faith. The root of faith is always the Word. We stick to the Word, rely on it, and work
25 according to the Word. I hope you believe this is the way of the believer. Faith comes from hearing
26 the message. And where is the message heard? Message is through the Word of Christ and the Word
27 of God. That's it. Don't despair if there is no miracle. Don't give up when no miracle takes place in
28 your life. Even in this dark night without a miracle we hold the Word of God. "The Lord says, the
29 Messiah will be born in Israel. He has been born somewhere in Israel." Just like these Magi who
30 held only these words and crossed over the desert and the river, and passed over the wild field and
31 mountain, when our lives also wander around the desert and through the dark night, even though
32 there is no miracle, brothers and sisters, don't despair. I hope you hold the Word, and work on
33 relying on the Word. I hope you and I, all of us, learn how to rely on the Word of the Lord.

34 Thirdly, in order to experience the guidance of God, we have to become people who worship the
35 Lord. We have to be people who adore the Lord. Brothers and sisters, what do you feel when you
36 hear this word? What do you become most interested in? For example, some businessman may reply
37 with 'worship to God.' Frankly speaking, this kind of answer is abnormal. It belongs to the

1 exception. Well, if my business is in trouble, then I want to be led by God. Then, I pray, "Oh God!
2 Please lead my business!" After that, what kind of thought fills my mind? Isn't it natural that it will
3 be filled with the expectation, "What kind of business? How is the Lord going to lead my business?"
4 For example, an old spinster wants to be led by God's guidance. "Oh! My Lord, Please lead me! Any
5 man will be fine." (Laughter) What does she think of then? "Is it this man, or that man? Is my
6 destiny Mr. Kim, or Mr. Lee?" It is natural that these thoughts come to fill us after prayer.

7 But dear brothers and sisters, when we want to experience the guidance of God, there is an important
8 fact we have to pay attention most carefully. Commenting on these same verses, Thomas Watson, the
9 last puritan preacher, uttered this very remarkable saying: "When God leads us, it is toward God
10 Himself where God leads." Listen carefully; "When God leads us, toward where does God lead us?
11 He leads us to Himself. Thus, dearly beloved, as we might expect, there would be some blessing in
12 the guidance of God. There might be some bonus in the guidance of God. Notwithstanding, there is
13 one thing we firstly have to pay attention to more than the blessing we might experience in God's
14 guidance. That is to meet God Himself! If God leads me, I am going to meet Him. God the creator,
15 our Lord, the hope of all humankind, my savior, I experience our Lord Himself. What a wonderful
16 and exciting experience this is! This is the really important thing.

17 These eastern Magi also had a clear goal from the outset. Seeking to meet the Messiah, they didn't
18 care about success. Maybe they might have wished that. But they came over with a clear goal in
19 mind. What do they say of the goal that drove them to Jerusalem? Let's read verse 2 again. "Where
20 is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship
21 him." For what purpose did they come? "Come to worship Him!" The Messiah has been born! At
22 that moment, this goal was the biggest thought that swayed their mind. Who would it be? The hope
23 of history, the hope of mankind, the Messiah our hope! I would like to bow down before him. I'd
24 like to worship Him. With this burning desire to worship in mind, they came along. And God surely
25 didn't ignore this desire. At last, the Lord has led these Magi. Through the star in the sky, through
26 supernatural providence, God led them to God himself who had come to this world at last. Do you
27 know how today's text describe this moving scene to meet the Messiah? Look at verse 11. Let's all
28 read verse 11 together. "On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they
29 bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of
30 gold and of incense and of myrrh." What did the Magi first do after entered the house? They
31 worshiped him. Whom did they worship? They worshiped the child. Here we need to remark on one
32 thing. God used the star to lead the Magi but they didn't worship the star. God may use the star but
33 as soon as the star God uses becomes the object of worship, it is an idol. God used a beautiful
34 woman, Mary, to send Jesus Christ to this world but Mary can't be the object of worship. Let's look
35 at verse 11. Whom did the Magi worship after entered the house? They worshiped the child. Who
36 was with the child? Mary was. "They saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down."
37 But the object of worship was only one. Who was it? It was the child. How could the child be the

1 object of worship? This child is the very God Himself. Do you believe it? God incarnated, God
2 come for our sake. It is only He who deserves our worship. They bowed down before him. They
3 worshiped Him.

4 What is the focus of worship? The focus of worship is to offer. That isn't to receive something. Dear
5 brothers and sisters, when you think of worship, if you just expect, 'There should be some benefit in
6 worship,' 'There should be some blessing in worship.' I mean, there might be, there is. But if this
7 takes the first place, then, it is a corruption of the spirit of worship. The most important thing in
8 worship is the Lord himself, the focus of worship. Our lovely God, my Savior, to Him, we offer our
9 love, and give thanks, prayer, and offerings. The central goal of the spirit of worship is to offer. The
10 Magi didn't care about receiving. They just wanted to offer. What did they present? It was the gifts
11 of gold and incense and myrrh. By the way, some people used to pay unusual attention to this
12 unimportant aspect. Thus many people used to be interested in the symbolism and meaning of the
13 gold, incense, and myrrh. Let me tell you the answer. What does the gold symbolize? Gold
14 symbolizes just gold. Incense is just incense. Myrrh is just normal myrrh. They dedicated their best.
15 They just wanted to dedicate their best, what they had prepared as their best, to the best Lord, to the
16 king of kings, to Him who is the savior of all.

17 Dear brothers and sisters, what is the most important interest that sways you? Today the chief
18 interest of our nation is to recover the economy. But I am one of those who definitely believe that if
19 our nation is concerned about the recovery of economy only, then, God will never bless our nation.
20 The recovery of the economy cannot be the ultimate goal of our nation. I hope that the economy
21 should recover, that it should happen quickly. But the recovery of economy shouldn't be the only
22 goal for us. If we seek to recover the economy without having a higher goal, and if we come to a
23 better life, then, what shall we do with this wealth? There is only one thing after that. It is to be
24 corrupt. This has been our nation's history over the past 10 years. We should have a higher goal than
25 the recovery of the economy. Through this bitter experience, let's pray for knowledge of God who is
26 the author of history, pray to become a nation who worships this Lord. Let's pray to recover this
27 vision. If we don't have higher dream of bowing down before the living God and adoring this God,
28 if we don't have the dream of the humble nation serving God and all nations with greater wealth
29 which helps the neighboring nation in a humble spirit, then, the recovery of the economy will just
30 end in a fantasy. If then, God surely won't bless us. When God leads us, he bestows some blessings
31 on us. But the more important thing than this blessing is the interest in the Lord Himself. When God
32 leads us, he leads us to Himself first. Ultimately, God led the Magi to the God who had come as a
33 child. At the very moment the Magi worshipped, how happy was God?

34 Only after that, the bonus blessing begins. What is the bonus blessing? Let's look at the next verse
35 12. Let's all read it together. "And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they
36 returned to their country by another route." After they worshiped Jesus the child, God worked for
37 them at night. God gave a revelation. What revelation was this? "Don't go back to Jerusalem. Don't

1 meet Herod. Go back to your country by another route.” This was special guidance from God. What
2 would happen if they went back to Jerusalem? Herod would have rushed to kill these Magi and all
3 the children. But because they worshiped God, He prepared a special plan and blessing. God led
4 them through special blessing. God’s guidance lies in the bonus of worship.

5 For those who worship the living God, in the dark night of my life, for those who bow down before
6 the God who is my Lord, God leads them into a new way of life. Let’s rely on the Lord who directs
7 the future of our lives. The Lord will lead us. If we become a nation that bows down before the Lord
8 and worships Him, He will surely lead us into a new future. He will lead all of us. Please believe
9 this! But for the time being, let’s forget the bonus blessing. Let’s just bow down before God. Let’s
10 worship the Lord, king of all kings, Lord of Lords, the God who has emptied himself, come to this
11 world to save us, born our sins, bled the precious blood on the cross, died and risen again after three
12 days. Before this Lord savior, let’s bow down, dedicate our best love, and give all thanks to Him.
13 Only when we learn this worship, only when our Christmas becomes the Christmas to learn this
14 worship, then, I hope you may believe that the guidance of God will be with us, with our nation for
15 tomorrow, in the journey of our life. Hallelujah! Let’s pray.